# Causa Dei:

## Gods pleading his own Cause.

Set forth in Two

# SERMONS

PREACHED

At the TEMPLE in *November*, 1659.

BY

Dr. *Gauden*, Bishop of *Exceſter*.

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BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

# TO THE Honourable Societies OF THE TEMPLES.

IN order to adorn my departure from you (*worthy and honored Gentlemen*) with a *Bene deceſſit* ſuch grateful reſpects and civility as becomes me, to your *eminent and worthy Societies*, I have formerly prepared, and now *dedicated* this following *Treatiſe*, as my *fare-well Preſent to you*, or a *ſecond monument* of mine, yea and of *your Honor*, after

that, which was by me the last year of *Englands captivity*, consecrated to the memorie of *my reverend* and *renowned Predecessor* Bishop *Brownrig*, under the patrocinie of *your Name*; that was as the *Urn* or *Conservatory* of his and *your reciprocal kindness*, and mutual merits, with whose *mortall remains your piety* hath adorned *your Temple*: This second piece is the substance of those two Sermons which I first preached among you, after I was invited ἐν καιροῖς καλεποῖς in those *dark* and *dangerous times* to bestow *my pains with you* in the *Term time*.

The main subject of this is, the *The true Cause of God*, and *the right pleading of it*. Which Theam I then chose to preach on, because I observed in the whole course of our *English tragedies*, that *every party* still pretended

tended, to act their *factious confusions* upon their *several stages*, in these three Kingdoms, under the specious dress, colour, title and *pretence of Gods Cause*, and the high *zeal they had to plead it*.

This, this was always inscribed on the most *bloody banners*; with this their tongues and pens were whetted who sought to build their *Counter-Babels* on the foundations and ruines of *Zion*: With this *Mark of the Lamb* were those *ravening wolves* marked, who *drank the blood*, and eat the *flesh of their Fathers* and *Mothers*, of *Kings* and *Clergie* of *Church* and *Country*, with this *Motto*, *The Cause of God and Christ*, their *false tongues*, their *crazie heads*, their *cruel hands* and *impudent faces* were to be set off to popular reputation; when nothing indeed was further from

their hearts or works.

O the *Cause of God*, the *Cause of God*, the *Cause of Iesus Christ* cries every tatling and teeming faction, when prostitute to, and impregnated by the incubus of some novel lust and *new fancy*, as if it were now in travel, and readie to be delivered of some *holy birth*, or *sacred prodigie*. This language or fallacy *non causa pro causa*, of urging the Cause where no Cause of God was, the rigid *Presbyterian* learned in *Scotland*; this the *puny Independant* brought from *Arnheim* or *New England*: This of old the *Anabaptists* cried up at *Munster*, when to encrease their Faction they multiplied wives: This the *silly Quaker* now peeps and mutters in every corner: This the more *bloody Papists* boasted of in *Ireland*, and other Bigots of that perswasion do

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every where magnifie the *Romish cause*, as the only Christian Catholick Cause.

Mean while all these parties *joyntly and severally* labour to overthrow the *true Cause*, and excellent constitution of this Church and Monarchie of *England*: That is the truth, peace, honor and order both of these *Brittish Kingdoms* and of our *Reformed Religion*, as it is conform to the *Word of God*, to our ancient *good Laws*, and to the customs of the true Catholick Church: In which, the *learned*, *loyall* and *Religious Nobility*, *Gentry*, *Clergie* and *Commons* of this nation, with their Kings, have ever judged that the true Cause of God, as to justice and Religion, holiness and peace, the divine glory and welfare of mankind, was and is most eminently contained.

I confess I was then *wearie* and ashamed of the counter-pleas & counterscusles of those bold and divided harlots, who did each pretend with *great zeal* the Cause of God against the other, in order to oppose Gods righteous cause, which certainly ever was and will be but one and the same for ever, as to the main of *truth* and *peace*, of *faith* and *good works*, of *justice* and *holiness*; I evidently saw by *many years* sad experience, that these rude rivals already had, and ever would first divide, then destroy the true *cause of* God, and the publick interest of this Church and Kingdom only to advance their *private* and *partial causes*, which were evidently leavened with most illegal extravagancies, with *sacrilegious covetousness*, with *immoderate ambiti-*

*ambitions*, with *inhumane revenges*, with *implacable cruelties*, and with impudent exorbitancies, and with moſt feigned neceſſities.

Hence it was that I adventured in ſo great and illuſtrious an *Auditory* (even before the day of our *redemption dawned*, or that *day-ſtar of the North appeared*, which afterward uſhered in our Sun of Righteouſneſs) I ſay I then adventured *truly* and *fully* to ſet forth my ſenſe of Gods Cauſe, with ſuch a reſolution as our learned *Bradwardin* Archbp. of *Canterbury* ſometime took up, when he ſet forth his large and elaborate Volume *De Cauſa Dei*, of which he thus ſays in his Preface, *De Cauſa Dei Scripturus ſciens manum in ignem terribilem mitto*, &c. That he well knew into what flaming fires

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(with *Scævola*) he put his hand; how many enemies he should contract and exasperate, by his *honest staring* and asserting the *Cause of Gods grace* and *glory*, against the *Pelagian pride* and presumption, who sought to advance the impotent power of nature, the cloudie twilight beams of *Reason*, and the maimed *liberty* of *mans will* (which is clogged, corrupted, and hampered with *many sensual lusts*) above the necessity and against the only *sufficiency* of Gods grace in order to his glory, and a *sinners salvation*: yet that *good Prelate* did both proceed and speed: he did his work and had his *reward*, both in a good conscience and in great successes, as to his repressing that *petulancy* of *poor worms*, exalting themselves against the great God,

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without whom they can do nothing but sin against him, and damn their own souls.

In like manner have I lived to see in a *few months*, after that bold *essay of mine among you*, the wonderful *revolutions of Gods providence*, pleading at once his *own*, the *Kings*, this *Churches*, and this *Kingdoms cause*; the *Cause* of our *Laws Liberties*, *Lives* and *Religion*; the cause of all honest men, for their *souls* and *bodies*, for themselves and their posterities, in their temporal and eternal *great concernments*: All these great and good Causes are at once *pleaded* by our *wise*, *just* and *mercifull God*, against those *strong delusions*, those *false pretensions*, those *rebellious usurpations*, and those *novel intrusions*, which under the *lie* and *hypocrisie* of *setting up Gods Cause*,

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and the *Cause of Jesus Christ*, made prophane men abhor the *very name*, & godly men to *pitty the reality of Gods holy cause*, which they saw so *miserably mistaken by some*, and *by others so shamefully deformed*, so *sordidly defiled*, so *impudently blasphemed* through the *wicked policies*, and *horrid practises* of some *monsters of men*, most *unsanctified Saints*, who were so *diametrally contrary* to the *Word of God*, to the laws of this Land, and to the example of Iesus Christ, and all true Saints; and so no more *capable* to set up or promote *Gods righteous cause* (except that of his *punitive Iustice* for our sins, to which the *Devils* themselves may serve as *Executioners*) then the sparks of hell can add to the light of heaven, or the *falling Stars and Meteors* contribute to

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the future of the Sun, or the crooked winding of the Dragons tail could give protection to the Woman and her child, against whom his mouth vomited those black floods, and Stygian eructations, which by Heretical or Schismatical, or Heathenish, or Antichristical persecutions seek to overwhelm them.

The great and blessed God hath taken the matter into his own hand; what you then faithfully heard, and devoutly prayed, for with me, as to Gods pleading of his own Cause, you have lived to see fulfilled, as it was then by me discoursed and foretold, while the poor people of England were batting between many opinions, all eagerly pretending to be for Gods Cause: One for Aristocracy, the other for Democracy, one for Presbytery, the other for

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pendency; one for their *Antiepiscopal Covenant*, another for their *Anti-regal Engagement*; one for *extirpation of Kings*, the other for *extirpation of Bishops*, a third for setting up the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*, in which they might rule instead of both King and Bishops (and all this (forsooth) in order to advance the *Cause of God*, though in ways quite contrary to the eternal rules of *charity*, *justice* and *religion*, the *Laws of God* and this *Nation*) amidst this confusion, the Lord from heaven hath on the sudden *convicted*, *confuted* and *confounded* all those specious, but *spurious pretenders to Gods Cause*, which is not to be begun or carried on (as I after declare) by any means but such as are pure & peaceable, *just and holy*, either by an *orderly doing*

good

*good in our places*, or by a patient and humble *suffering of evil inflicted* on us, though it be for *well-doing*.

It is most evident, that as in *natural*, so in *civil and Ecclesiastical motions*, all things *magnetically move*, as they are moved by their *chief cause* or *grand concern*, which by a *circular kind of influence* studies to unite the *final* to the *efficient cause*, that the power of the one may enjoy the good of the other.

This *Cause* is the first and last *mover* of every knowing *agent*; it is the *weight and spring* of all rational *activity*; it is a *pulse* ever importuning the *spirit*, and beating upon the *heart*, the *one thing necessary*, to which men seek to make all other things *subservient*, or at least *subordinate*, the centre from which and to which all lines are drawn. The

The better to compass their respective designs, every *Agitator* for *Faction* did cunningly entitle *God to their Cause* (as some that are cautious of the *crackt titles of their estates* resign the *Fee* to the *Crown*, and take from them a *Lease of a thousand years*) so did the *counterfeit* and *contrariant Causes* (lately so sculling in *England*, for *place* and *power*) set themselves up under the name of *Gods Cause*, while they were indeed the causeless corrupters of our Laws, the Nations heavie *curse*, the *Churches moth and corrosive*, and *confounders* of all; yet each of their pretended causes were impudently pleaded by some men in Churches and Courts of Iustice as *Gods Cause*, yea & by some *Superstitious Parliaments* they were voted for, till they had run themselves and all

all of us (like S. *Pauls* ſhip in the ſtorm) upon ſuch rocks of *Anarchy* and *confuſion*, as were paſt *humane hopes of recovery*, if God himſelf had not *aroſe by a providence* (ſcarce *ever paralleld in any age or inſtance of the world*) to plead by a *ſtill voyce*, after all our foregoing *earthquakes*, *fires & tempeſts*, the Cauſe of his own great Name, and the *honor of our bleſſed Saviour*, with the *ſanctity of our Reformed Religion*, and the *Loyalty of our Engliſh Nation*, the rights alſo of the *Crown*, with the double honor of our *Church*, and in ſum the juſt reſtabliſhment of all our long ſhaken and overthrown *foundations*; the cauſe of all which was pleaded more effectually in a few calm *Months*, when the voyce of *Law* and *Reaſon*, of *Loyalty* and *true Religion*, came to be heard in *our ſtreets*, then they had been, or ever could have been in *many*

*years*, by *plunderings* and *sequestrings*, by *killing and slaying*, by illegal *covenanting*, and perjurious *engaging*, by *devouring* and *destroying* both *Church* and *Kingdom*.

I am piously ambitious (though my station be now removed from you, & made (without my seeking) much *uneasier*, though somewhat higher, then it was before) to depositе this work with you, *O worthy and honourable Gentlemen*, among whom it had its first *production*; of whose love and favor, as you know, I never made any *mercenary gain*, or *pecuniary advantage* (as that wretched *Libeller*, or *Creticus Borboritеs* enviously suggests, my charge of attending *your service* being beyond any *benefit I ever received*,) so I must own this, as the greatest reward

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and only satisfaction, which I ever had, or expected for *my pains among you*, that I had thereby an *happy opportunity*, in so *noble an Assembly*, and in so *desperate paroxysms* of our *distempered times*, to set forth with my wonted freedom, the great *concern of all good men*, which is the true *Cause of God*; which must be pleaded against our own and others lusts; and to discover those potent epidemical cheats which under that name had so long abused these *British Nations* and *Churches*.

I well remember, that some of my more *touchy* and *guilty hearers* (men of name at that time) were at once *scared* and *scandalized* to hear me preach so freely and smartly of that subject; they feared their practice and craft would soon fail, if

once the true *Cause of God* were rightly stated and pleaded: yea some men of the long robe, and of large *consciences* protested after the hearing of the first Sermon they *durst not hear me preach again on that subject*, least their silence should make them guilty of *High-treason*, by their not *complaining of me* to the *Trayter* then tyrannizing over us: Indeed they were justly *jealous* that the true *Cause of God*, like *Moses Serpent*, would eat up all those of the Magicians: That the Cause of Christ, of the true heavenly *Jerusalem*, would either *batter down* or undermine those *bloody Babels* of their *Commonwealths*, which were indeed the *common woe*, though it made for some mens *private wealth* by the prices of blood and *wages of iniquity* which they greedily received.

I thank God, I never feared the *frowns* nor affected the *ſmiles* of ſuch *ſervile Sycophants*, who durſt plead any *Cauſe* but what was truly *Gods*, the *Kings* and the *Churches*. I had then ſufficient *encouragement* from the *love* and *approbation* of the moſt and beſt of their *Society* (without which, yet I ought and ſhould have *done my duty*, upon the account of *conſcience and inward comfort*) Hence is this my *confidence of inviting* you again to *review the Cauſe of God*, which hath been now mightily pleaded beyond what we could *aſk or think*, God himſelf *conquering* the *monſters of our ſins and miſeries*, by the *miracles of his mercies*.

My aim is to *retain* and *engage* as *Counſellors*, *Advocates*, and *Servients* to this *righteous cauſe* (yet without any other *Fee* then that of a *good conſcience* in this world)

not only men of my own profession, as *Divines and Ministers*, but you also that are either *the Sages* and *Iudges*, or *the Students* and *Practisers* in the Laws; because I look upon you *as Masters of great Reason*, and no *less tareful* (I hope) of *true Religion*, best acquainted with the constitutions of this *Church* and *Kingdom*; persons generally adorned with *ingenuous education* and *good literature*, yea and, which is more in vulgar cies and esteem, with good estates; *Gentlemen* related by *birth*, or *alliance*; or *clients* or *acquaintance* to the best *Families* and *greatest affairs* of the *Nation*; you either fill the one or attend the other *house of Parliament*; while no *Bishop* or other *Clergie-man* never so worthy is admitted to come there, unless as a *Supplicant* or *Delinquent*; your *counsels* and *examples*

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are not onely *influentiall* in your *country retirements*, but also *efficacious* in all the *Cities* and Courts of *England*.

It is your custom, and no less your wisdom and *honor* to keep to, and plead for the τὸν ἀρχαῖον, the *Magna Charta*, *fundamental Laws* and *antient and excellent constitutions* of this *Church* and *Kingdom* (not therefore *good* because *ancient*, but therefore *ancient* because they were judged and *experimentally found* by our wise and *pious Progenitors* to be *very good*, yea *best* for this Church and State:) It becomes the freedom of your *spirits* and *estates*, as Lawyers and Gentlemen (however *the poor Clergie* are oft compelled to *popular dependancie*, yea and some of them (like leeches) thrive best when they hang most upon the skins of people) I say it becomes

you to be the furtheſt of any *men living* from *flattering* or *abetting* any *factius novelties*, or *Fanatick Novellers* in Church or State, which you cannot do without *greater ſin and ſhame* then other men, becauſe you have more knowledge of good and evil, *of Law and Iuſtice*, of *Reaſon and Religion*; the guilt and burthen of *other mens ſins*, which are lead and deluded by *your counſel or example* muſt needs lie heavie upon *your ſouls* (as well as ours of the Clergie) when being their *guides*, *lights* and *oracles*, you or we prove their deceivers and *ſeducers*.

Certainly if the poyſon *of ſome Lawyers teeth* had not *venomed* the *wounds* which ſome *Preachers tongues* firſt gave to the life and welfare of this Church and Kingdom, we had not run to ſuch *hor-*

*rid*

rid ulcers, such *inveterate* and *incurable gangreens* of *disloyalty* and *irreligion* of *faction* and *confusion*; nor endured so *various*, *ridiculous*, and *superfluous Tragedies*; which then began when *Pulpits* rang *Aarons* bels backward, *as to the Cause of God*; and *Courts of judicature* meanly conformed to the *vilest lusts of men*, such as have given *horror* and *astonishment* to the *modest part of mankind*; and which threatned (except the Lord had been merciful to us) to have *tormented Kings and Parliaments and people* of all *degrees* in the *hell fire* or *Tophet of everlasting fewds*, *factions and confusions*, under the specious *name*, but most *putid fallacy* of *Gods Cause*, the *good cause*, and at last the *good old cause*: though nothing was more vile and novel, less *ancient* or more *arrantly wicked*, for *perjury*, *perfidy*, Sacri-

*Sacriledge* and *Regicide*, void of all *fear of God*, or *reverence of man* contrary to the *Word of God* and *Laws of that Nation*. A Cause, the zealous Martyrs forewhich are only fit to be put in the *Devil's Diptych* or *Calendar*, or in God's *Black book*, not in the *Book of life*.

Against all which *presumptuous impostures* in Church and State *You* (*O worthy professors of the Law* and of our *reformed Religion*, as well as we *Preachers of the Gospel*) have now all *honorable and safe encouragement* to oppose ourselves under the *protection* of *God* and the *King*, that both you as *Iudges* and *Iustices* by the civil sword, and we as *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, by the *spiritual sword* may be as valiant for the honour and order of the *established Religion* and *Laws of England*, for the ancient and excellent *Government*

*Regal*

*Regal* and *Episcopall* of this *Church* and *Kingdom*, as others have been *impudently pragmatick* to broach those *novel errors*, most illegal *injuries* and high indignities which they brought upon us, more by our own *cowardize* perhaps then their coutage. Let us dare as much to be *Loyal* and *religious*, honeſt and orderly, as others have dared to be falſe and baſe, inſolent and irregular, injurious and ſacrilegious.

They wanted not many *black mouths*, vile tongues, and *libellous pens* to plead for the *Baalims* which they ſet up (meer *Idols* and *Teraphims* in *Church* and *State*) which are now (bleſſed be God caſt out to the *moles* and *bats*. O let not us, for I would have no difference between your learned *Tribe* and ours, let none of us who are moſt verſed in *God*

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or mans Laws, be wanting to the *true Cause of our God* and *Saviour*, of our *rightful King*, of our *reformed Religion*, and of our famous *Church*, in its *Doctrine, devotion, discipline* and *Government*, In the cause of which, all your and your posterities *happiness* are included. Since then by the goodness of God the *monstrous and many-shapen Dagons* of our late *Philistins* and *oppressors*, are now faln to the ground and broken off *head, hands*, and *feet*, a *meer fanatick stump*; let us turn *Israelites* unanimously set our selves, as we have done, to the welcome reception of his Majesty, so to bring home with *truth* and *peace, honor* and *order, joy* and *jubilation* the *Ark of God*, the *Church* of *England*, restoring it to its place, and adorning it *with all the beauties of holiness*, worthy of

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the *wisdom* and *piety*, *munificence*, *courage* and *honor* of our *Ancestors* who were famous both for their loyaltie and Religion; the fruits of whose care and constancie we enjoyed heretofore, as *men* and *Christians*, in a wel-reformed, united and setled *National Church*, till some men lost their *wits* and *hearts*, their *credits and consciences*, their *sense of duty* to their *God and their King*, yea and their first love of our *reformed Church* and *Religion*, for which our *famous* Forefathers had so *notably pleaded*, not only in the *Pulpits* & at the *Bars*, but in *prison* also, and at *stakes*, when they were able to say with truth and comfort, as the *royall Martyr of admired memory*, did now dying *That they thanked God they had a good Cause and a gracious God.*

Certainly tis better thus to suffer *for God cause* (in pietie, justice

patience

patience and charitie) then to prosper in the *Devils* with sacrilegious *usurpation and injury*; this as a *fire of thorns may blaze for a time*, but it will soon be extinguished, the other carries the *lawrells and crowns of eternal victory*; for though we *die for it*, yet we shall *live by it*; the greatest trophies of *Gods cause* are in another world, there our *Lord Iesus Christ* with the *Prophets*, *Apostles*, *Martyrs*, *Confessors*, and all the true *Professors* set up their victorious banners, and rest in *eternal Triumphs*. O let us all *cast anchor* in *Gods Cause*, and we shall have no *cause* to fear the *tossings of this world*, which was and ever will be a *restless Sea*. Let us keep *Faith* and a *good conscience* from shipwrack by preservation of our *Laws* and *reformed Religion*, so shall we and our posterities, *Kings and Subjects* be most safe on earth, however

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we shall be sure to gain our main *cause* and *process* at last in *heaven*, tho in other things we be *less advantaged* as to this *world*, for all our *care* & *pains* in pleading *Gods*, *the Kings*, and *the Churches Cause*. In which I hope I have not been *wholly wanting* to *my duty* in the *worst of times*; nor shall I be now *discouraged* in these more *Halcyon days*, however *my sun* may seem to be in its *Western decline*, wher I find my self preferred as to much more *love*, *civility and honor* from the *Gentry*, *sober Clergie* & *ingenuous people* of that *Diocess* then I can well deserve, so I am exposed to much more *business* and *fatigue of life*, sweetned with far less worldly *comfort* & *tranquillity* then formerly I *enjoyed*, when I had the *happiness* of a more *convenient* as well as a more private and retired *condition*, but I owe *my self* more to the *publick cause* of God and *his Church*, of *my King* and *Country* then to my own ease or private interest,

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for those we must be willing to do, *suffer*, and *deny our* selves in any thing short of heaven, sin and hell; faithful seruice of them is our greatest *freedom*, highest honor, and will be at last our greatest *reward*, if we can but have *patience* to wait a *few years* till we pass to another *world*, where the *crown* of *eternall glory* shall be set on the head of that vertue which envie here *may depress*: That you with my self may *persevere* in sincerely pleading and promoting Gods blessed Cause (which is our own) is the earnest prayer of, *Your very humble Servant*

*John Gauden*, Bp. of *Exeter*.

*Exeter Feb.* 20. 1660.

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## ERRATA.

Pag. 66. line 26. r. *which*, l. 27. r. *of*, l. 28. dele *them* (). p. 6[illegible] l. 16. r. φιλάνθρωπος & σωσάνθρωπος, l. 18. r. *Hinges or Axes*, l. 19. r. *polar*, p. 89. l. 15. r. *pleaded*, p. 150. l. 19. r. *I*, p. 15[illegible] l. 8. r. *pursue*.

Causa

# Causa Dei:

## *Gods pleading his own Cause.*

Set forth in two SERMONS Preached at the Temple in *Novemb.* 1659. Upon

PSAL. 74. 22.

***Arise, O God, Plead thine own Cause: Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.***

This Psalm is a most [illegible] Lamentation for the deplorable state of the Church of God among the Jews in the Babylonish captivity; after the Ju-

The scope of the psalm.

ſtice and Wrath of God had let in the power and malice of enemies, as a mighty flood, which ſwept away not onely the civil peace, liberty, plenty, ſafety and honour, with the Majeſty and Government of the State, but alſo the very face and form of the Church; The publick profeſſion, order, decency and ſolemnity of Religion, the Worſhip and Service of God, moral and ceremonial, as to ſacrifices and oblations, Prayers and praiſes in the Temple.

The ſad eclipſe of true Religion in any Nation.

§ A matter of the greateſt conſideration to every pious and devout ſoul, who cannot but be grieved to ſee Religion (as the light of the ſun) put under a buſhel, confined to cloſets and corners, driven to private and precarious Conventicles, to be forced to thin and ſcattered *Congregations*; or which is worſe, to affect ſeparate Conventicles, where the [illegible] of truth will never be able to [illegible] charity warm, or cover the [illegible] of Schiſm and Faction.

[illegible] is then time to cry out with

old *Eli Ichabod*; The glory is departed from *Israel*; the *beauty of holiness* is turned into *sackelath* afhesand; publick joys sink into mourning, and solemn Halelujahs into sad lamentations, full of sighs and tears. 1 Sam 4. 21.

There is no cause to triumph, or joy upon any civil and secular accounts in any Nation, never so prosperous when true Religion is eclipsed, or the true Church and its Ministry discountenanced, debased, persecuted, plundered, destroyed, reproached: Then if ever, as the Mariners cryed to *Jonah* in the storm, *Every man should cry mightily to his God*, apply his hands to the ore; that is, to such means, as being pious and prudent, are only proper to be used in Gods Cause. *Observ.*

This Psalm bears the name of *Asaph*, that famous Master in *David's* time of Church-musick, both *Vocal* and Organical; in which there is so much of humane, yea divine sweetness, composure and rapture, that nothing but savage Barbarity, and rude hypocrisie, can envy or deny The Author of this Psalm.

the Church of Christ, both Christian and Judaick, the blessing of *holy harmony*, in singing to God, and setting forth his high praises in the greatest perfections of melody that man can attain unto, and the Churches gravity enjoy. Not that it is like to have bin then penn'd by *Asaph*, as if by the spirit of prophesie he had foreseen, foretold and forewarned the *captivity* four hundred years before it came to pass; but either some other of that name wrote it in the time of the captivity; or some man of another name might then write this doleful Psalm or *Threnody*, to the composure, method or tune of *Asaphs* excellent melody, who was one of the chief Singers, leaving to after ages further monuments, not only of devout compassion of the Churches affliction, but also of those heavenly comforts, which may in all cases be used and enjoyned in such holy forms, as do set forth the exemplary passions of devout men; either as to joy or sorrow, complacency or compassion, prayer or praise,

praiſe, in publick or private concernments; ſo that, not onely (as St. *James* ſpeaks) *If any man rejoyce, he may ſing Pſalms of praiſe and thanksgiving*; But if he be afflicted, he may read, pray and weep over ſuch divine Ditties as are moſt ſuitable to the ſence and ſorrow of his ſoul, or the ſtate of the Church, yea, and of any private friend. James 5. 13.

His Sympathy with the Church.

This holy Pen-man (whoever he were) having an heart full of zeal for Gods glory, no leſs then eyes full of tears, and lips full of complaints for the Churches calamities, ſuffers himſelf to boil over to all the *Topicks* of *pathetick Oratory*, and devout importunity, ſometime deploring in general the ſad ſtate of things, otherwhile complaining to God in particular inſtances; yea in one place he ſeems to complain of God himſelf, as if he were regardleſs and negligent of his own intereſts; *Tanquam cæcum & ſurdum numen*; as if he needed a Monitor and Remembrancer to mind his *own cauſe*: one while he deplores Gods fierce anger againſt his Church;

Verse 1. Then he tells him of the near relation he had to that *suffering Cause*.

Verse 2. After he shews God the sad and shameful prospect of his Churches ruines: what *havock* the enemies insolent and *unbridled rage* had made;

Verse 3. First, of his publick Worship, then of the very places which his name had consecrated, and pious gratitude had both dedicated and adorned with poliure and art, to be Temples or Synagogues, that is *Houses of God in the Land*: Then he quarrels and almost chides (as it were) by an humble expostulation,

Verse 9. and pious impatience Gods long silence and *great reservedness*.

§. At last, to take off any seeming *stupor* (which is not incident to the *Divine omniscience*, and most vigilant clemency) he applies the most *sharp spur* and *pickquant goad* in the world; namely, the *reproaches of God's and his Churches enemies*; which the Lord professed *long ago* so much to fear (speaking after the manner of men) and thereupon more than once *disarmed his Justice*, now brandished against his own

Gods fear of mant reproaches.

own people when they had sinned, and highly provoked him not onely to punish them, but to purpose and threaten the utterly destroying them; yet he made gracious *retractation*, that he might avoid the dint and impression of his enemies poysoned darts and venomed arrows, even bitter words, petulant scorns, and arrogant reproaches, which *Moses* represents to him, as a notable allay or cooling to the over-boylings of his wrath: And it wrought so effectually in the highest paroxysms of Gods anger, that the Lord chose rather to use the shield of his patience, long-suffering, great goodness and indulgence towards his Church grievously apostatising (that he might thereby defend himself from the *sarcasms* of his enemies, as if he were either ignorant or impotent, or *malicious* or *mutable*,) then by using the sword of his Justice too rigorously against his Church, to wound both it and himself, to the most odious joy, and insolent triumph of their common enemies,

Verse 12.

Psal. 64. 2.

who hated and opposed the Church, not as sinning and swerving sometime against God, but as serving of him, and adhering to him in some measure at least, beyond all other men.

13, 14, 15. 5. The Psalmist further urgeth the former experiments of Gods power and providence, as in the general course of nature, which is regular and constant; so in the special exigents of his Church; endeared to him, as the *Turtle* to its harmless and loving *Mate*, from which to be separate is as death; Gods covenant with the Church is firmly alledged; also his faithfulness is pleaded; his lasting philanthropy or tender regard to all that are oppressed, is inculcated; and nothing omitted that pious passion can suggest, or compassionate Oratory can express in so few words.

Verse 16.

Verse 19.

6. After all these *lively colours* brought forth with no less skill then plenty and vehemency, to set forth what he either deplores or deprecates, or supplicates; he adds at last this notable *Ingemination*, to

to rowse and excite God, to consider, if not his poor Churches calamity, yet his own great concern. The pathetick Pen-man is resolved not to *let God alone*, to give him *no rest* till he had some answer worthy of his love, pity, jealousie and zeal; yea worthy of so merciful a God, who ambitiously delights in the titles of the Father of pity, and God of all consolation; Therefore he adds this *Epiphonema*, or close, as the *ultimi conatus, & novissimi ejaculatus ecclesiæ*;

*Arise O God, plead thine own cause, &c.*

As to the partition of the words, we may easily discern these particulars in them; The division or parts of the Text.

First, The excitation, *Arise.*

Secondly, The Invocation, *O God.*

Thirdly, The declaration, *To plead.*

Fourthly, The Appropriation, *Thy own cause.*

Fifthly, The grand Motive or Inci-

Incitation, *Thine enemies reproach thee daily.*

Sixthly, The Sollicitor or promotor of the *process*, *action* or *plea*; The pious and pathetick pen-man of this *Psalm*, who had rather seem rude and importune, then irreligious to God, or uncompassionate to the Church, by being either silent, or so *cool*, as if he were indifferent, and thereby taught God to *deny* him, by the *faintness of his asking*; he asks, and seeks, and knocks; he *prays*, and *cryes*, and *roars* for the disquietness of his soul; his *bowels are turned within him*, and his *soul poured out like water*, impatient of a repulse in such a *Cause as was Gods own Cause.*

Of the word Cause.

The word *Cause* is not here taken in a *Physical* or *Metaphysical* sence, nor in a natural or logical notion; but (*sensu forensi & politico*) in a politick sense, as a term used in Courts of *Judicature* (*in foro vel sensu*) to shew the rational and just foundation upon which civil *Pleas*, or legal actions are grounded; and

from

from which, as to the point of *right* or *wrong*, all controversies derive the force and efficacy, as all *activity* and *effects* do from *natural causes*.

So the Hebrew ריב ריבך, denotes a contest, by way of complaint, rebuke and repair, whence the waters of *Meribah*, or strife had their name, where God pleaded with the *murmuring people*. So *Gideon* is nick-named *Jerubbaal*, for pleading against *Baal*, *Judges* 6.31. And the LXXII. ἀνάστα Θεὸς, Δίκασον τὴν δίκην σοῦ. And the Latin, *Litiga litem tuam Domine*; do all import a quarrel or *controversie*, an action of the *Case* in point of *Trespass*, injury, or indignity, wherein Gods honor was concerned, which was not to be put up in silence, but a just reparation to be made.

Exod. 17

2 Sam. 15. 48

In this sense both the Greeks use αἰτία, & αἴτιον; Also the Latins, *Causa*, or *Caussa*, as *Tully* oft, and other ancient Orators, no less then the later pleaders, according to our common, or the *Imperial* and *Canon Laws*.

Thus

Its sense or import here.

Thus the word *Cause* denotes, *Id quod est (ut in vita & voto) sic in lite causalissimum*; that which is the τὸ ζητούμενον, the ἀξιότατον, ποθινώτατον, or *optatissimum*, the πρῶτον καὶ ἔσχατον, καὶ μέγιστον, the ἓν καὶ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον; the main center, Hinge, Butt, or Design; the chief *end* & *motive*, that grand *concern* and interess which men are most fearful to forfeit or to be frustrated of, and to lose, or miscarry in.

The Etymology of Cause.

Some Etymoligists in their (λεπτολογία) Grammatick curiosity are pleased to derive the word *Causa*, either from *Cautio*, because men are most wary not to fail of it, (which is *Causa cadere*) or from καῦσις, heat, and burning, indicating the fervor and zeal with which men prosecute their main *cause*, and their indignation against those that oppose, or obstruct them in it, or lastly, from *Chaos*, as that which contained in it all primitive, natural, and elementary causes.

The many pretended causes which men plead as Gods.

This last *notation* doth very unhappily fit our sad condition in *England*, when under pretence of *several causes*, which the eager, partial,

tial, and inordinate prosecution of them (pleading them (*Arte & Marte*) by arguments and arms too, by word and sword, by fraud and force, by faction and fury,) we have run our selves in (*Chaos antiquum*) almost to a very *chaos* or *confusion*, both in things civil and religious; as if we were *brevis, Terræ filii, gigantum fratrecidi*) a company of Mushroom men and Christians sprung out of the earth but yesterday, a nation in its *infancy or minority*, which is now to learn its *A. B. C.* of Religion and civil government, being set back by a most sad and horrible fate, from *Homers Iliads*, to our *Primmer* or *Peeriles*, by I know not what new Teachers, and many Masters.

6. So that it is high time seriously to meditate, conscientiously to preach, freely to write, and fervently to pray upon this subject: The *Cause* and the *Cause of God*, since every party pretends *a Cause*, and *Gods Cause* too, which they are most eager and ambitious not only to plead fairly (but to) obtrude forcibly

forcibly on all others? Thus from the great Pretenders to the Catholick Cause (of which the Romanists would seem the chief Patrons) to all other Sects and Subsections either in civil or religious Factions. All parties are divided by their Causes, and the whole is destroyed by their Dissensions. Ask any side why they thus shuffle and cut, why they thus divide and destroy? why they do things so different from solid Reason and true Religion, contrary to all Laws of God and man, contrary to the duty they owe to God, their Country, their King, their Posterity, the Church and the State, as to *Justice*, *Veracity*, *Peace* and *Charity*? Ask why, like *Ixions* wheel, or *Sysiphus* his stone, they *overturn*, *overturn*, *overturn* all things civil and sacred by their endless vertigoes and rotations? their answer is short, as that of *David* to his brother *Eliab*, *Is there not a Cause?*

1 Sam. 17. 29.

Trial of Causes.

1 John 4.

It will not be amiss therefore (as St. *John* adviseth Christians to *try the spirits whether they be of God*

or

*or no*, of *Christ* or of *Antichrist*; to examine the several pretended and pleaded *Causes*, whether they be *Gods Cause* (which is indeed αἴτιον αἴτιον, *Causarum causa*, the Cause of Causes: The Cause and interest of all the *blessed Angels*, and all *true Saints*; worthy of Princes and Peers, of Gown-men and Sword-men, of all honest and good men; or whether they be not the Cause of the *Devil*, and of mens own evil lusts, disguised with this *larva* or vizard on them, which may not uncharitably be suspected of some of them; Since it is most certain, they cannot all be *Gods Causes*, they are so many, so multiform, so mutable, so divided, so destructive to each other; they must needs fail either of the main end and ground, or matter and method of *Godr pleading his own Cause*.

Address to the Auditors in behalf of Gods Cause.

§. Of which I shall (by Gods help) endeavour to give this honorable and Christian *Auditory* such an account, as may either inform, or at least confirm your judgements in the true *Cause of God* (that you

you may not *be tossed too and fro with every wind of causeless Cause*, which blow as mens passions and secular interests do arise.) And further, I hope to excite your judicious abilities, and eloquent attentions (who are persons of so great learning, experience, and public influence) to be ever zealous in the *good Cause* which is Gods as (*bona causidici*) honest and able Lawyers to shew your skill and will in the great concerns of God, his Church and your Country; which are now so eagerly pleaded and counter-pleaded among us. Appeals being as it were made to every one of us, to judge in our selves which is the *righteous Cause* of God, to which we ought chearfully to give our suffrages and *assistance*, as most undoubtedly conducing to our publick happiness both in Church and State, in civil and religious concernments; let not this be *your Cause*, a desolate and forlaken Cause, in which no men of parts and estate will appear.

9. And certainly, if I had less experi-

experience then I have of the favour of the *Court* (I mean of this *Christian Assembly*) which is met in Gods *Courts and presence*, yet I may justly have great confidence, as to the merit of that *Cause*, which I shall seek to present to you, and plead before you this day in Gods behalf; As *Jotham* therefore said to his Countrymen, *Hearken to me, that God may hearken to you*: Attend diligently to the pleading of his cause, who alone can *plead yours*; yea and hath given us *an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous, whose blood speaks better things for us*; whose wounds are so many *eloquent mouths*, whose cross was loaden with strong crys for us whose merits are undeniable *mediators*; whose Spirit continually makes intercession in us and for us, even then when we know not what to say, or how to pray; either *unable to plead*, or *ashamed to speak for our selves*: *Gods Cause* may sometimes seem to want our pleading for it before men; but our cause doth really and ever need the *plea-*

Judges 9. 7.

God alone can plead our cause.

1 John 2.

Heb. 12. 24.

dings of Gods mercy and Christs merits before the *Tribunal of his Justice*, that there may be a prohibition granted at the humble *motion of believing and penitent sinners*, to remove the *suit* or action from the *Bar of Divine Justice*, to the *Throne of the heavenly Grace*, where we may finde mercy to relieve us in all our distresses, despairs and deaths.

Heb.4.16.

6. Before I set before you the main fruits with which I intend to entertain you out of the Text; it will not be amiss to gather an handful of those fair flowers which offer themselves at the first view of the words, as so many short, but sweet and excellent observations.

1. Obs. God hath his cause in this world.

1. We may observe, That God hath his *Cause* too in this world, his great *design*, *concern* and *interest*, as well as the wise, Statists and great Politicians, as well as the strong, and the rich, and the learned, and the ambitious, and the malicious, and the voluptuous, and the covetous men of the world; who so eagerly plead and pursue their own pro-

jects

jects and *Causes*, that they not only many times forget Gods, but generally croſs, contradict and oppoſe it, as with their ſin and folly, ſo to their ſhame and ruine; for as the *counſel*, ſo the *Cauſe of God ſhall ſtand*: Nor is it to be baffled by any other force or fraud, ſtrength or ſophiſtry: It is as truth (*Magna & prævalebat*) a great Cauſe, and will prevail, by the help of a wiſe and ſtrong God; though for a time it may be unjuſtly condemned and crucified by unjuſt men (as Chriſt was) yet it will at laſt be raiſed again in power and glory; yea and juſtified before men and Angels; It will, as *Aarons* rod or ſerpent, devour all thoſe of the worlds *Magicians* and *Polititians*. It is a *Cauſe* which will be (as fire) conſumptive of all other, and conſummative of it ſelf. Pſal. 33 11. Exod. 7. 12.

2. *Obſerv.* As God hath *his Cauſe* in this world, ſo it becomes him *to own* it: It is *opus Dei*; the work of a God to plead his own Cauſe, as *Gideon* ſpeaks of *Baal*. Idols were convicted to be *no Gods*, becauſe

1. Obſ. God ever did and will plead his own cauſe in his due time.

they could not plead for themselves by speaking or doing good or evil, as the Prophet tells Idolaters. Therefore the *Psalmist* here so earnestly urgeth it upon God; who he believed ever did and would own his own *Cause*, so as to *plead it himself*, in his own way and time; Both as to the Majesty, truth, justice, holiness and honor of it; also as to the indignities which are by evil men cast upon it; *Summus Deus summas patitur injurias*; none is more a sufferer, as to the malice and insolence of wicked men, than the most *blessed God*; who yet is as impassible, as the suns light is uninfectible with the filthy exhalations of dunghils. *Plato* puts this true saying into the mouth of *Socrates* dying under the malice of his persecutors, *Anytus* and *Melitus*: ἀδύνατον, *&c. It is impossible for evil to make any impression of affliction upon that which is good*; and which can (as a jewel) so preserve its native goodness and firmness, that suffering shall make it not onely no way diminished, but (as in the wheel and file,

1 King. 8. 59.

file) more illuſtrious and *meritorious*; ſuch were the ſufferings of Chriſt properly, and of all good men (in an *Evangelical* ſenſe) being for a *good Cauſe*, and on *Gods account*; till God ceaſeth to be juſt, and good, and true, and faithful, vigilant and zealous for his own glory, his cauſe cannot utterly *miſcarry*.

3 *Obſerv.* The *Cauſe of God* may be, as to the eye of the world, and to the ſenſe of the beſt men, in a *moſt ſad, dejected, deplored, deſpiſed* and *deſperate eſtate*; ſo *ſunck and oppreſſed*, that there is no outward ſign of its being ever boyed up and recovered; thus it was repreſented to *Elias*, as if he onely were left to *plead a loſt Cauſe*: So the Diſciples expreſſed their ſorrow and deſpondency; *We verily truſted this had been he who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael.*

3 Of. Gods cauſe may be in a very deplored ſtate.

1 Kings 19. 10.

Luk. 24. 21.

So *Mary* weeping to the *Angels*, anſwers their queſtioning of her tears; *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*: many times the foundation

Iohn 20. 13.

of Church and State, of Juſtice and
Pſal. 11. 3. Religion, are *ſo out of courſe*, that the righteous know not what to do or ſay; all things ſo unhinged by violent, wicked, and unreaſonable men, that nothing moves by any order or written Law of God or Man, but by the power and impulſe of mens own luſts; who from Gods ſilence, permiſſion and patience, are prone fooliſhly to conclude his approbation and liking of their cauſe and ways, yea and to
and 50. 21. ſay *God is ſuch an one as themſelves*: the diſtreſs of Gods Cauſe may be ſuch, that the whole Church may be ready to cry out, as the Pſalmiſt, *Help Lord, for vain is the help of man; It is time for thee O Lord,*
and 60. 11. *to put to thy hand, for they have*
and 119. 126. *made thy Law of none effect.*

6. So did the Heatheniſh perſecution, and the latter Romiſh ſuperſtition tyrannically triumph a long time over the *ſlain Witneſſes*,
v. 11. 4. the Law and Goſpel, the Scriptures and Catholick Traditions, the Preachers and Profeſſors of that true Religion; which hath been

to teſti-

teſtified, both as to *moralities* and *myſteries*; *faith* and *manners*, not onely by the two *Teſtaments*, but alſo by the confeſſions and converſations of all antient and modern Chriſtians, conform to Gods Word, and the beſt Churches cuſtoms. The vapor of numbers, pomp, proſperity and prevalency, are no demonſtrations, either to approve the cauſe of *Arius* or *Antichriſt*; or to prejudice the cauſe of Chriſt and of Gods true Church: But as *Lucan* ſpeaks of the cauſe of *Pompey* and *Ceſar*, in which the *juſtice* of the firſt was overborn by the ſucceſſes of the ſecond, *Victrix cauſa Diis placuit ſed victa Catoni*; the gods abetted *Ceſar* by victories, but *Cato's* conſtancy adhered to *Pompey's* and the Senates conquered cauſe, becauſe it was moſt juſt.

4. *Obſer.* The Cauſe of the *true Church is Gods cauſe*, moſt ſignally and peculiarly in this world; his intereſts and concernments are ſo linked with its, that they are *inſeparable*; as *Jacobs* ſoul was bound up in *Benjamins*; as the Husbands

4. Obſ. The cauſe of the Church is ſignally Gods cauſe.

Gen. 44. 30.

honor in the Wives, as a friends happineſs in a friends, ſo is the relation between God and his Church; if that be *black*, *God is eclipſed*, as to the moſt viſible *eradiations* of his glory to this world; if that be bright and conſpicuous, *as a City on a hill*, in truth and holineſs, in charity and proſperity, Gods great name, praiſe and renown are moſt glorious and illuſtrious; Then his Wiſdom, and Truth, and Juſtice, and Power, and Mercy, and Patience, and Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs are in their *meridian ſtrength*, as the Sun at noon day. If the Church be hidden, it is as the *moon turned into blood*; or the Sun of Righteouſneſs into ſackcloth, as *Joel* ſpeaks; as *Joſhua* (aſtoniſhed when *Iſrael turned its back upon its enemies*) ſaid to God, *And what wilt thou do O Lord to thy great Name?* So do holy men, they are prone to deſpond and deplore Gods own condition and Cauſe, when they ſee the Church of God, or any part of it, as to its veracity, ſanctity, order, peace, proſperity

Ioſh. 7.9.

ſperity and unity, decline and decay, under error, prophaneſs, perſecution, diſorder, diſtraction, diviſion, or any uncomfortable condition; *Tunc periclitatur cœlum, & Dei res agitur*; then Gods Cauſe is at ſtake; then, as in the Giants aſſault, his heaven is in hazard, as if he were in danger to be (*numen infelix*) a miſerable God; Then is *Chriſt toſſed in the ſtorms*; then do true Beleevers cry out, as the Diſciples, *Lord ſave us, we periſh*; *Help Lord, and do it, for thy own name ſake, which is called upon by us*: God hath no *conſiderable deſign* in the world, but that of his Church; when this is conſummated, the world, as the *ſcaffold*, or ſtage, or ſhell, or chaff, is to be deſtroyed. The Church cannot be undone, until God is undone and bankrupt. Mark 8. 25.

5. *Obſer. No Church hath ever been ſo famous and flouriſhing in outward piety, plenty, peace and proſperity, but it may fall under perſecution and great oppreſſion*; ſometimes indeed (as God ſaid to Satan, Iob 2. 3.

5 Obſ. The moſt flouriſhing Church may be under great depreſſions.

tan, in the case of *Jobs* trials) without a cause; that is, as to any predominant and unrepented sin, at present provoking God against him; but only as Christ said of the man born blind, *That the work of Gods grace and Spirit might be manifest* in the trials and tribulations of his Church: So in the first ages of the Church, when Religion was purest, and love warmest, yet was the fire and furnace of persecution hottest. Sometimes indeed, as a *fruitful land is made barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*; so the *lukewarmness* and *corruptions* of a Church, the Apostasies and falling of Christians from their first *Faith*, loyalty, patience, love and good works, may cause God to hide his face, to withdraw his protection, to *remove his candlestick*, as he threatens, and to give over his *Turtle* to the will of its adversaries, who shall set up their *banners*, and *roar* in the *Sanctuaries*, and break down all her *carved work*, and strip her of all her *pleasant things*, as it is, and hath been for some

Ioh. 9. 3.

Psal. 107. 34.

some years in *England*; the wild *Bore* and the *Fox* shall them do their pleasure by force and fraud against her; this is the variable state of the Church Militant; mutable as the *Moon*; though it be *cloathed with the light of the Sun*, yet it may be so eclipsed and turned into blood that there is no help for her but in her God. Perfect and perpetual felicity is a state onely expectable in heaven; till there is no sin or spot in the Church and soul, there can be no security against sorrow, shame and sufferings, which are our physick in our valetudinary constitution, to which this life is subject; yea Christ himself the Son of God and Saviour of the Church though without sin, yet was not without suffering, while he was found in the form of sinful flesh, and bare by way of susception, imputation, and satisfaction, all our sins. Psal. 80. 3.

6. *Obser. Times may be so bad, and on such a desperate pin, that none can either safely or effectually plead Gods cause or his Churches,* ‹ Obs. Times may be such that none but God can plead his Cause.



*but*

*but himself*; who onely can create deliverances and mercies, who alone commands the *winds* and *seas to obey him*; who can restrain the *fury of man*, and turn the remainder of wrath to his praise; who can change the *heart of Esau*, and stir up the spirit of Princes, as he did *Cyrus* and *Darius* to *build his Temple*, and restore his captives; who can either conquer *Pharaoh* by main force and dint of judgements, or change the decree of *Ahasuerosh* by *gentler operations*; who can level *great mountains* before *Joshua* and *Josedeck*, and exalt the lower valleys, the day of small things, and of a despised Cause to bring forth his salvation; who gives nursing *Fathers* and *Mothers* to his flock and family; and such shepherds as shall seek the strayed, carry in their bosom the weary, feed the hungry, and cure the diseased, not with rigor, and austerity, but with love and tenderness: Thus after the sharpest persecution of *Diocletian* (when Christian Religion (as Monarchy and Episcopacy hath been by some

Psal. 78. 60. 70 and 80.

Ezra 1. 1.

Zach. 4. 7.

Isa. 49. 23.

Isa. 40. 11.

in

in our days) was triumphed over, as *extirpated*) God raised up *Constantine* the Great, and other Christian Emperors after him, who restored life, liberty, honor, and support to the Church; after the Church was seemingly dead, as St. *Paul* when he was stoned, yet it rose up again; when *Israels* burthens were heaviest in Egypt, then was their redemption neareſt, because their devotion was warmeſt, and Gods compassions tenderest to them. After the *Marian* bonefires and butcheries of so many *carbonaded Christians* in *England* (filling all things with earthquake, fire, tempest and horror) in what a still voyce for many years did God plead by a wonderful and unexpected providence the Cause of his Church and the Reformation of Religion here in *England* for an hundred years; as I pray he will do again for us in mercy; because he hath not forgotten to be gracious, nor do his compassions fail, but his mercy endureth for ever!

7. *Obser.*

7 Obs. Gods cause is (yet) never desperate.

7. *Obser.* *Gods cause must never be given for lost or desperate while God remains, (who is both able and willing to plead it)* or while any good man, as *Moses*, or *Samuel*, or *Elijah*, or *Daniel* remain; who by fervent prayers can and will put God in mind of it, and excite him to it. As *David* and *Jehosaphat* encouraged themselves *in the Lord their God*; so must good men in bad times, when the *best cause goes by the worst*. A man would even willingly die such a death as our late *Martyr King* did, on condition that he could with *faith and truth* dye with that divine sentence in his *mouth* (as he did) *I thank God I have a good Cause, and a gracious God.*

2 Sam. 30. 6

This supported the Martyrs and Confessors of old, that when they *were slain for Gods cause all the day long*, yet (as *Sulpitius Severus* says of them) they then hastned more ambitiously to *Martyrdoms*; then afterward in times of peace, others did to the greatest *preferments* in Church or State.

Though

Though *figtree, and olive, and flock, and field, and all fail*, yet (the Prophet tells us) he will rejoyce in the Lord, *even in the God of his salvation*; The Lord will arise *as a Giant refreshed* with wine, to plead the cause of *Sion*, and to vindicate the honor of his great name, which is graven on his true Church, as *on the signet of his right hand*; in the highest storms we may cast this anchor. God can and will appear for *his cause* in the midst of the *fiery furnace* never so hot, no less then in the *cool of the day*. Hab. 3. 17. Psal. 78. 65. Dan. 3.

8. *Obser. When all means fail, yet the prayer of the faithful must not be wanting to Gods cause.* This is (*in naufragio Tabula*) the rafter left the Church in the greatest shipwrack; when neither *Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars appear*, yet if this Angel the spirit of prayer appear in our agony, we may be of good cheer, as St. *Paul* was: A good Christian as *Moses*, and the *Syrophenician* woman, must not give over its pious importunity, though God seems angry, and Christ averse. God

8 Obs. When all means fail, prayer must be applied to Gods Cause. Acts 27. 24.

cannot

cannot deny the *fervent prayers* of
Iames 5. 16. the righteous; they will be *effectual* in time, even to *open prison doors*, as they did in St. *Peters* case, when the Church prayed incessantly for him, *Act.* 12. 5. As the *vapors* that ascend from earth to heaven, are after returned in sweet showers that have in them *vital* and *celestial influences*, being impregnated with *etheria or heavenly spirits*; so are prayers of the faithful. Devout souls that lay to heart the cause of God; cannot be more bold then welcome to him in such cases; God is as well pleased with their excitation or solicitation of him, even to a kind of imperious commanding of him (which the Prophet expresseth) as a man is with that ruder importunity by which he is awaked out of sleep to quench his house on fire, or to save his son from drowning. There
Isa. 45 11. is more efficacy in praying for the
Psal. 122. 6. *Peace of Jerusalem* then in fighting. The fiery chariots and horses that are in the brest of *zealous and devout Orators* will do more good then armed legions of Soldiers.

9. *Obser.*

9. *Obser. There is not a greater sign of a good and gracious heart, then to lay to heart the Cause of God*; even then most passionately, and earnestly, when it is most deserted, most deploring, most despairing; a good Christian must make good what St. *Peter* said well to Christ, but performed ill, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I*; Is God touched with our concerns, and *afflicted in our afflictions*, and zealous to plead our righteous cause; to contend with those that contend with his servants, *Isa.*49.25. when we are molested or oppressed in any kind, by sin, temptation, weakness, darkness, dejection, diffidence, persecution, or desertion? and shall we be as *Gallio* in *Gods cause*, or as *Nabal* to *Davids*, *not caring or concerned?*

6 Obs. It is a sure sign of a gracious heart to lay to heart Gods cause.

Matth. 26. 33.

Isa. 63 9.

The *Cause of God and his Church* are (as I said) inseparable; no man is affected with one, who is neglective of the other; this example we have here added to others of *Noah*, *Lot*, *Moses*, *Phineas*, *Samuel*, *Eliah*, *Micaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Nehemiah*,

*Daniel*, *Mordecai* and others, whose vigilancy and pertinacy was such in the *cause of God* and his Church, that they were resolved to give *God no rest*, till he did *arise and plead his own cause*; Nothing is more imitable, nothing more commendable, nothing more practicable, nothing more comfortable, provided we rightly understand what the Cause of God is, and apply to it, as becomes God, his cause and our duties; then tis heroick to say with *Esther*, *If I perish, I perish*: This is Angelick with *Moses* (δυσωπεῖ τὸν Θεὸν) to put God to the *blush* and *silence*, *If not, blot me out of thy book*; and tis *super-Angelical* to say with St. *Paul*, *I would wish to be accursed from Christ for the Churches sake, and Gods cause*; our duty in which we shall then best understand and perform, when we have duly considered these four things.

Isa. 62. 7.

Esther 4. 16.

Exod. 32. 32.

Rom. 9. 3.

The four main subjects of the Discourse.

1. *What the Cause of God is.*
2. *What need we may have of his pleading it.*
3. *How God doth plead it.*

1. Immediately by himself.
2. Mediately by such instruments and means as he is pleased to use among men.

In the fourth place is to be shewed *What is the true method or manner to be observed by all good men in pleading Gods cause with him and for him.*

When these are finished, and such Patheticks applied by way of use, as may cast your wills in the mold of your judgements, and make your affections to keep pace, at least to follow your understandings; I shall (I hope) not onely discharge in some tolerable measure my own duty and undertaking, which is great, but answer your favourable and Christian expectation, which I see is not little; for I abhor nothing more then the ostentation of so ample a text, to so ample an Auditory, in such exigents of times, even agonies of Gods cause in Church and State, in Justice and Religion, and to do nothing worthy or proportionable to them;

which defect in me, and neglect in you God forbid; whoſe aſſiſtance, as I humbly implore; ſo I may not deſpair, ſince it is in *his own Cauſe*; which muſt needs be the beſt, and may modeſtly hope for his gracious help in my pleading and preaching for it, againſt all frivolous, fallacious and impertinent pretenders to it; the rather becauſe it is not onely my particular *cauſe*, as a Chriſtian and a Miniſter, but all yours, together with your poſterities as men, as Engliſh-men, as Chriſtians, and as Proteſtants: We know that of the Orator, *In propria cauſa unuſquiſq; ſibi videtur & potens & eloquens*: if in our own, much more in Gods Cauſe (which is our own too) we ought to do our beſt on all hands.

1 General, What this cauſe of God is.

Firſt, *What this Cauſe of God is.*

I take it for granted, what I firſt obſerved, *That God hath his cauſe in this world*, who made all things by his wiſdom and power for his glory, and is, as a wiſe A-

gent,

gent, highly concerned, as to do nothing in vain, so not to fail of his main design: It is no other then Atheistical blasphemy to deny that God hath any concern or cause on earth, or that he regards them that doth, and will ever plead for them; God hath not *left himself without witness* in the world, that he is, and that he looks to the managery of all things; specially of mankind, and peculiarly of his own Cause: It is not (*natura volvente vices & lucis & anni*) that all things are fatal and necessary, confining God as well as man to inevitable events; which is the fancy of those (*Qui nullo credunt mundum rectore moveri*) who have either no Faith in God, or no thought worthy of a God. Acts 14.17.

Gods *silence and patience* are the prejudices which men have taken against his *Providence*, and that special care of things, which runs (as *spiritus intus agens*) in all permissions and events, which are not, as to God, either contingent, or by constraint, but under the free, and Gods silence, and patience in his own cause.

soveraign disposition, which is every way worthy of a most wise disposer, and almighty worker; hence
2 Pet. 3. 3. *mockers*, as S. *Peter* observes, are prone to ask, *Where is Gods cause, where the promise of his coming?* Where are his prophesies, what he would do for the good in mercy, and against the wicked in justice? even thus of old the Gnostick pride and presumption jeered, when vengeance was at the door, and judgement overtook them to an utter *desolation* of the Jewish Polity. They are such as *live without God in the world*, that say he *will do nor good nor evil.*

Many are *willingly ignorant* that God hath any *cause* in this world; and many are *mistaken* in the true Cause, and in their pleadings for it; *without right understanding the heart cannot be good*; since the *pregnam inventions* of men *in all times*, especially in ours, have found out many Causes, and every one is cryed up for Gods. The first *foundation-stone* to be laid *in this building* is to know *what the true Cause of God is*,
Prov. 19. 2.
Eccles. 7. 29.

of

of which every one boasts, as his *peculiar*, till another comes and finds out the *fallacy*. Prov. 18. 17.

This I shall shew, first, by giving *general characters of Gods Cause*; such as are ἴδια & ἄκρα, proper, essential, and intrinsick marks of it.

Secondly, I shall by way of *Induction* shew you the particular parts or branches *by which it spreads it self in the world.*

First, The Cause of God is known by these marks, or essential properties. The marks and properties of Gods cause.

1. It is *Causa optima*, not only a *good cause*, but the very best; yea, the onely good one in the world; the measure or standard of all others, as the first and best of all Causes, which are only so far good, as they are conform to, and concurrent with the *cause of God*; whose *internal rule is the moral will of God*, its end the glory of God; It is good in its principles and in its practices, every way *vera, pura, justa, divina.* 1. The best cause.

2 most true according to Scriptural verity.

2. It is true, according to *Scriptural verity*, which is revealed in the holy Word of God, fixed and infallible, not depending on uncertainties, which are *sceptical*, *conjectural*, and *opinionative*; much lesse upon *fantastical and enthusiastical notions*, according to the fancies, dreams, and inventions of men, that are rather *heady* and *giddy*, then *hearty and godly*.

1 Psal. 5. 4.

5. Gods Cause is never to be carried on by fictions or lyes, by fables or legends, which are but mans devises and the *Devils stratagems*, as impertinent to advance God Cause, as blackness is to augment light: as with God, so with his Cause no iniquity dwelleth.

3 It is a most holy, pure and just cause.

3. It is an holy, pure and just Cause, in all points, as it regards 1. God in religious adoration, inward reverence, and outward veneration. 2. *Our selves* in chastity and sobriety. 3. *Others*, in justice, humanity and charity, in all things that are morally and evangelically commanded us as men and as Christians, in civil and religious societies.

4. It

4. It is *Cauſa unica & catholica*, as to its integrality or completion, but one and the ſame, as to its main ends and proportions, confined to the love of God and our neighbor, uniform in all *moral, ſpiritual* and *eſſential forms* of righteouſneſs and true holineſs, however it hath had ſome different diſpenſations as to outward forms, and variable miniſtrations, which are ſtill concentred in one true God, in one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in one Spirit, and in one *true faith once delivered to the Saints*, *Jude* 2. Ephes. 3. 5.

4 It is an intire and catholick cauſe.

5. It is a *conſtant Cauſe*, not admitting variations, as to the main end, means and meaſures of it: It is indeed *cauſa antiquiſſima*, the eldeſt (as it is the concern of the *Ancient of dayes*) affecting no novelty, and abhorring all inconſtancy, as to the main and eſſentials of it: change of *circumſtances, cuſtoms* and *ceremonies* in Religion, which like leaves grow up and fall with time, is nothing to the body and life of the tree, which is ſtill the ſame, as the man is the ſame

5 Conſtant to it ſelf.

man

man though he may change his cloaths; circumstances of Religion fall under providence and prudence of men; but the substance of it ariseth from an eternal fountain of divine Wisdom, Power and goodness, carrying on all things to the infinite ocean of Gods glory; by the various streams or derivation of his providence to mankind, and specially to the Church of God; in Truth, in Justice, and in Mercy; as men either sincerely adhere to, or maliciously oppose the Cause of God.

The most ample and Augustcause.

6. It is every way *causa amplissima, nobilissima & augustissima*, the *most noble and ample cause*, containing in it the greatest concernments of *Men, Angels and God himself*; yea it is accurate in the least things essentially belonging to it; as having nothing indeed *small in nature*, yea and *aggrandising* all things, even circumstantial, which it contains in its large circumference of piety, charity and decency; even to the least ceremonious actions and words, yea secret desires and thoughts; as every little

point

point in a great circle, hath its great relations, aspects, and dimensions, in reference to the center, sphear, and circumference whereto it stands related.

3. Although this *magnificence* be true of the Cause of God in its mystical and moral grandeur, yet its name and honor is not to be *fixed* or *confined* to, much less inscribed on every partial and *covenanting pretention*, every small *ceremony*, outward circumstances, and petty opinion, which are mutable, dubious, dark, and disputable, of which men may be ignorant, or doubt, or deny, or differ without *danger of salvation*, as to any unbelief or *immorality*; with which *weak Christians* must not be perplexed nor entertained. In these, many times prejudices and presumptions of men do much mistake and run on the fallacy of *Non causa pro causa*; crying things up or down, either for or against the *cause of God* (just as they interpret Prophesies in Scripture) according to their own presumptions and passions, which like

Yet the cause of God consists not in minute matters.

Rom. 14. 1.

*Optick*

*Optick glasses*, do *multiply* or *magnifie* them in their fancies, agreeable to their factions and interests; wherein once engaged, they may have such a pride, *obstinacy and ambition* as affects to do and suffer much for *their cause*, as they truly call it, which is not Gods, but their own; There that old Maxim of Martyrdom is true, *Non pœna sed causa facit martyrem*; No suffering can transmute an ill Cause to the honor of martyrdom: Mens private and petty causes, like the small byas of a bowl, do too often sect to oversway the great Cause of the great God, which consists

But in grand and clear cases of faith and manners. Rom. 14. 17

*righteousness*, not in *meats and drinks*, or any minute business and observation, but in *Righteousness, Truth, Peace* and *Holiness*. Outward ceremonies of Religion, are but a *fring*, or *lace*, or *pint*, or *cloath* to the body or being of a man;

Of ornamentals and essentials in Religion.

*ornamental, not essential*; *accidental* and *occasional*, not *substantial* and *necessary*; they may be changed without detriment, according to that wisdom, liberty, charity and order

1 Cor. 14. 40.

which

which becomes the Church *of Christ and the Cause of God*; they must not be cumbersom and uncomly; as pins that scratch or run into the skin; or as garments too strait-laced, heavy and uneasie; there must neither be such a *nakedness and deformity*, nor such an affected pomp and variety, as exposeth the *Cause* of God and true Religion to laughter and contempt, as a matter of pageantry or penury. 1 Cor. 14. 40.

9. It argues men have less sight of the *suns* greater light, when they much magnifie *Nebulous stars*, or their own farthing candles, or every glo-worm under a hedge; yea the circumstances and ceremonies of Religion most fall off as the mantle from mens eager disputes, and *concerns* for or against them, by how much mens spirits, with *Eliah*, ascend highest, to heaven.

5. The Cause of God, as to the majesty of its verity, morality and charity, hath in some ages suffered much *eclipse*, as to its true lustre and grandeure, by these films or clouds, these motes or mists which have risen

The cobwebs of small controversies catch flies.

risen in men eyes, otherwayes not bad or blind. They are commonly but as flies, of weak and buzzing Christians, who are so easily catched, and so long held in the *cobwebs* of ceremonious *controversies*, which reach no further than the skirts and suburbs, that is, the *circumstantials of Religion*; yet from these sparks (good God) how great fires have been kindled and continued in this Church? As of old in the one *dispute*, which was so eagerly in the Church, about the time of *celebrating Easter*; whether on the fourteenth day of the moneth, as the *Easter Churches* used, or on the next *Lords Day after*. Holy *Polycarp* Bishop of *Smyrna*, when he came to *Rome*, conformed to the custom of that Church, in the first Century; yet afterward Pope *Victors* passion excommunicated all the *Eastern Churches* upon that point; which precipitancy *Irenæus* so justly reproved.

Of varieties among good Christians.

There are some innocent varieties (in things indifferent) which are admittable among Christians, as a-

mong

mong the Evangelists in the History of Christ, who all adhere to the true cause of God, serving not onely to exercise their charity, and to shew the world that *unity of the Spirit in the bond of Truth*, which they yet constantly hold, but further to manifest to the world, That Christian Religion is not a matter of policy and humane conspiracy, but of divine verity in unity, as to the main, to which some variety in lesser matters is no prejudice, but rather a confirmation; as that resemblance which proclaims kindred in the different features of brethren, who had one Father and Mother. Certainly it had been happy as for all Christian Churches, so for *England*, if we had on all sides more minded the *great things of Gods Cause*, and less troubled our selves about the *nails* and *hairs* of Religion; they are commonly but small minds who make much ado about little matters, which administer *much strife* and *little edification* in truth or love; Christians may and must [illegible] keep the

Ephes. 4. 3.

the truth in love, *Ephes.*4. though they do διαφέρειν ἐν τοῖς ἀδιαφόροις, differ in things indifferent; the substance of Gods Cause should have more influence to unite hearts, than the ceremonies to divide them.

7 The cause of God is orderly and comely in all things.

7. Yet the cause of God is *Causa ordinata omnium*, very regular and orderly in all its motions, full of harmony and beauty, abhorring any ways that are *preposterous, desultory, violent, uncomely, disorderly, tumultuary, confused*: It needs none of these devillish engines to carry on the *Cause* of him, who is the God of order, decency and peace, not of division, confusion and contention. *Extravagant* and *excentrick spirits* easily lose the *Cause of God*, while they follow it in a preposterous *& wrong way*, as men may easily miss the centre of the circle, who lay their rule in the least degree awry from the diameter; the passions of men, and their popular policies *never work out the righteousness of Gods Cause*, but trouble, foil, blemish and blaspheme it. Not *fire*, and *earthquakes* and *whirl-*

1 Cor. 1. 13.

James 3. 16.

James 1. 20.

*winds*,

*winds*, but the *still voyce* and *calm* 1 Kings 19.12.
*spirit* do best bring forth and set
up by *meekness of wisdom* the true 2 Tim.2.25.
*Cause of God*, and Christ, and the Iames 3.13.
Church; especially as to the concerns of *Religion*: Nor may that cause of *civil Justice* which some pretend to, be promoted by any unjust and illegal ways, of tumult, sedition, and rebellion; these mar all, and instead of repairing or purging the Temple, with *Josiah*, *Ezra*, *Josedeck* and the *blessed Jesus*; they set both Church and State, Temple and City on fire, as did *Nebuzaradan* and his Master *Nebuchadnezzar*.

3. These *notes*, or genuine characters are the surest and safest tokens by which to discern Gods Cause, both in its own merits or temper, and in the minds of those that undertake to manage it.

Other novel popular and politick pretensions, as to *outward providences*, *prosperities*, *successes*, *multitudes*, *prevalencies of brutal and irregular power*, *vulgar flatteries*, *and factious adherencies*; or as Of populer and false marks put on the Cause of God.

to the respect of *mens parts, learning, eloquence, seeming zeal, and cryed up devotion*, they are all *spurious, partial and fallacious.*

1. The Sun-shine of ordinary providence and success, of prosperity and power, may fall upon *Causes* that are evil and unjust, no less then on the *just and good.* Mahomet hath had great and long successions of successive power to assert his *cause*, and multitudes do follow even that *Beast* as well as the *Lamb* or the *Messiah*: Outward prosperity is the idol of fools, who care not how little the Cause of God prosper and prevail in their souls, if it thrive as to their purses and estates. Successes are pursued by silly and sordid people, as gay Butterflies are by children: *Gods Cause* is seldom seen in crouds, or rabbles, and throngs of people, which Christ abhorred and avoided: As its course is *strict*, so its path is *narrow.* Rev. 5. 45.

Of mens rare gifts, great endowments and severe Professions

2. As for the decoys of personal gifts and endowments, of zeal and seeming or real *severities in some things.* King *Saul* had (as his height)

so

so his heats above other Jews, against the *Gibeonites* and *Witches*; so *Jehu* had his zeal against the house of *Ahab* and *Baal*; *Paul* once breathed threatnings against the *way of Christ*, with equal ignorance, imperiousness and confidence; *Novatus* wanted not his zelotry and preciser passions; nor *Manes* and *Montanus* their spiritual and seraphick *pretensions*, with rigid fastings; *Origen* and *Tertullian* had their *excellent abilities*, which *Vincentius Lirinensis* calls (*Magnæ tentationes magnorum ingeniorum*) their temptations to extravagancies; they were like fair flowers and fruit, which are too big for themselves, and so crack or break; nor did *Donatus* want his devotion, nor *Pelagius* wit and learning; nor *Faustus Socinus* of late his severity and strictness, with his sophistry; nor any Heretick or Schismatick ever failed to have some *lure*, either of sensual liberty, or special sanctity to take people withal: So the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, as *Sleidan* and others tells us, cryed most vehe-

mently for Justice, Mercy and Repentance; other *Enthusiasts* had their rare visions; and the very Ideot *Quakers* boast of their inward illuminations: so the most putid Friars, and politick Monks had their forged miracles, and forced celibacies, set off with great austerities, to cover over their seditions. Satan hath many masks and vizards of an Angel of light; yet he is never further off from *Gods Cause*, then when he most sets men a work to cry it up, and carry it on, in ways that are no less unjust, violent and extravagant, then perhaps for a time successful, as was the *Arrian perfidy*; which seemed so zealous for the unity of the *Deity*, that they sought to overthrow the *sacred Trinity*, and the grand foundation of the *Christian Faith*, honor and comfort, the *Incarnation*, the *Word made flesh*, the Theanthropy, and Philanthropy of God to mankind, in the *Incarnation of the Son of God*. Their disputes, as St. *Cyrill* tells us, were not more sophistical and perverse, then specious

Satan a pretender to Gods Cause.

and

and plausible; insomuch that the *pest infected* in a few years the most part of the Christian world, both in Court, Cities, and Countries; which was (as St. *Jerom* says) amazed to see it self in a short time so bewitched with the *Arrian enchantments*, which set up a *new Saviour* and *another Gospel* then was primitively beleived in all Churches. So the *Novatians* and *Donatists*, or antient *Catharists* (which were the Christian Pharisees, or Puritans) pretended, as *Optatus* and others tells us, so to promote the Cause of the Churches purity, that they destroyed its unity and charity. And the *Pelagians* so stickled for the power and liberty of mans will, that they derogated from Gods grace and glory, as St. *Augustine* speaks.

8. *Causa crucifixi, sæpius crucifixa*; as Christ, so his cause (which is Gods) is oft not onely *circumcised* but *crucified* with him, yea it may seem dead and buried too for a time to the judgement of sense; we must not look for the *true Church* Gods Cause most what a crucified Cause.

always cloathed with the sun, but rather *flying into the wilderness*, and
Reve. 12. covered with sackcloth: The *prosperities and crowns* of *Gods Cause* are reserved *for another world*; here the cross, and thorns, and buffettings, and spittings, and blood, and spears, and nails do not mis-become it, but conform it to its head.

§. 'Tis certain the *Cause of God* was then purest as to *faith and manners*, when it was (like gold in the furnace and fiery trial) under the first ten persecutions, which lasted, with some lucid intervals, *three hundred years*. In vain do those that seem high *zealots* for the *Cause of God*, dream and speak big of *houses, and lands, and liberties, and victories*, and kingdoms, and crowns, and Judicatures, and reigning with Christ after secular methods and policies of blood and fraud; these are figs in this world: The honor, riches, crowns and comforts of true Christians are *figs, and grapes, and olives* that are not to be gathered
Phil. 1. 29. from the *briars and thorns of the present world*; in which, whoever will

will *live godly, muſt expect*, and *patiently ſuffer*, but not deſerve, *perſecution*. *A good Cauſe* muſt not think it ſtrange to finde bad entertainment on earth, where it is a *pilgrim and ſtranger*: Times are ſeldom ſo good, as really to favour Gods Cauſe; however the *policies* and *luſts of men*, their pride, licentiouſneſs, covetouſneſs and ambition may ſeem to flatter it ſo far as ſuits with their preſent intereſts; which are moſt what, τῇ ἰδίᾳ ξυμφόρῳ, ſelf-ſeeking, partial and inordinate, *ut in vitis ſic in cauſis homines ſpes improbas alunt*: as in other things ſo in religion, men have their impious ambitions, and perverſe hopes. 2 Tim. 3. 12.

6. Whereas the *Cauſe of God* is a *ſelf denying cauſe*, as to all *ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; teaching us to live *contentedly, righteouſly, ſoberly and godly* in all things. Tit. 2. 12.

7. So that theſe large flags and ſtreamers, which ſome men of the *Roman*, or other factions of later editions hang out to the vulgar, as to the *potency* and *proſpe-*

*rity* of their Cause, argue no more *Gods cause* to be with them, or they with it, then the fine feathers in *fools caps* argue them to have *wit* or *wisdom in their heads*; coppar may be thus stamped and guilded, which will not endure the *fiery trial* as true *gold will*; and such is the Cause of God, ever pure, and precious, just and holy, though it be oppressed and persecuted; as a jewel it loseth not its *native lustre* and worth, though it be ill set, or *cast into the dirt*.

An Embleme of Gods Cause.

To conclude this general description of Gods Cause; this may be its Emblem; It is as the *tree of life* in the *Pardise of God*; the *root* of it is the *Truth of God* in his word the *sap* is *holiness* or *true sanctity*, the *leaf* is *charity* without dissimulation, the *rinde* or *bark* is *order* and good discipline in the Church; also *Equity* and *civil Justice* in the State; the lesser and lower *fruit* is *every grace* and *good work* growing in us or from us; the ἀκροθίνια, *prime and topmost cluster* is *Gods glory* and the *salvation of sinful*

*ful souls*, through his free grace in Jesus Christ.

Having shewed the general tokens or marks of *Gods Cause*, I now proceed by way of *Induction* and *instance* to set forth the particulars in which it consists.

2. Particular, wherein the cause of God cheifely consists.

1. The grand Cause of God is *his own glory*; this is the first *mover*, great *conservator*, and last *consummator* of all things, which the divine Wisdom contrives, or his Patience permits, or his Power performs, or his Justice, Goodness and Mercy moderates, or his Word commands. For this cause he hath made and manageth all things in heaven and earth, that the glory of his being may appear to men and Angels, who are with all humility, gratitude, adoration, service and admiration, to return the just *recognition and praises due to the divine Majesty*, for all his *essential excellencies*, and his *gracious emanations*: every Attribute and Perfection of God is by them to be owned, with due respect

1. That his Glory as God be owned in the world.

ſpect of *Faith, Fear, Love, Duty, Adoration and Admiration*; thus his Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Mercy, Immenſity, Eternity, Veracity, Immutability, *&c.* are to be conſidered by men and Angels, with ſuitable affections reflecting from them to God. And among Chriſtians the unity of the Divine Nature, together with the *Trinity* of the ſacred Perſons or relations, diſtinguiſhed by the names of *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit*, muſt be ever owned, celebrated and adored, according to the wonted Doxology, or περισσιον, uſed in the Orthodox Churches.

Gods plea againſt Atheiſts.

This Cauſe, God hath in all ages pleaded, as his own *royal concern*, againſt *Atheiſts*, *Polytheiſts*, *Idolaters*, *Antitrinitarians*, *Anthropomorphites*; againſt *prophane and proud livers*, who live as if there were *no God above them*; alſo againſt vain and falſe ſwearers, who blaſpheme the name of God, and bring a curſe on their ſouls, families and countries; againſt preſumptuous wicked doers, who are their own gods and worſhippers, both ſelf-Idols and ſelf-

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Idolaters. This is the first, most immediate cause or concern of the *Divine Nature* and *Glory*, that God be owned, and none beside him, or comparable to him. This will be made good against wicked men and Devils; by the pleas and principles of right Reason, by the sensible beauty, order, harmony, proportion, usefulness and constancy of Gods Works in the world; by his signal providences in judgement or mercy; by his preservation of the Scriptures and the Church with true Religion; by the predictions fulfilled; and lastly by the terrors, convictions and presages of mens consciences, which are that ἔνδον δαίμων, the little God in our own breasts, as *Mar. Aurelius* calls it.

2. The next great concern or Cause of God is that of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the eternal Word, and coessential *Son of God*, the blessed *Messiah*, the *brightness of the divine glory*, and express *image* of the Father. It is not enough now to believe in God, as *Creator*, and *Preserver* of men, but we must also believe

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Iohn. 14. 1.

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Luk. 6. 35.

Acts. 4. 12.

1 Iohn. 3.

§. Of this great and mysterious Cause, God gave the world an account of old, under *types, figures, sacrifices and many ceremonies*, as shadows and resemblances under the Law; but now the *Substance*, and *Son of Righteousness* is come, and hath fully taught his Church the will of God, and the work which sinners have to do, which is to *repent* and *beleive in him*, whom the *Father hath sent*; who so beleiveth not, *makes God a lyar*, and is already

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3. The *Cause of God*, extends to the true *Church of God*, as an holy *corporation* or society of such as do truely *believe inwardly*, or *outwardly*, and profess with Order and Charity, the word, worship and *service* of the true God, with our Lord Jesus, and the blessed Spirit, according to the rule of the Scripture. 3 The Cause of the Church is Gods Cause.

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The Ministry Gods Cause.

That the Ministers of it by *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons*, as to its Authority, Order and supports, be maintained, agreeable to the primitive pattern instituted by Christ, in the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy Disciples, with their attendants in holy offices; this is the cause of God, as that of Embassadors, and their followers in the cause of those Princes that send them, is Commission'd and instructed; they that receive them, receive *Christ*, and they that reject them, reject him; and they that defraud or rob, divide and destroy the *Church* and *Ministry* of *Christ*, are *Robbers* of *God*, *Sacrilegious Felons*, from the blessed Son of God, who is Heir of all, and to whom we owe all we have, as redeemer of us, and all blessings we enjoy.

2 Cor. 5. 2.

Mat. 10. 40.

The Sacraments, Gods Cause.

The great *Seals* of the Church also, the two Sacraments are the *Cause of God*, not to be prophaned, or neglected; For which cause God sharply punished the

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settled and sealed by their wisdome and the Churches consent, as a primitive Catholick custom, the veracity and antiquity of which is asserted by the Churches testimony both in all Histories, and in its practice not to be doubted, disparaged denied or abolished without great insolency and peevishness, either to gratifie Presbytery, or Independency, both which are novelties of yesterday, and so cannot be Gods Cause, which is *verissima & antiquissima*, as old as it is true and good.

The Churches liberties is Gods Cause.

2. The *Cause* of *Gods* Church, both in its Honour, Order, Fidelity, Support, rule and government, is so far *Gods Cause*, as he hath made his Church the *Pillar* and ground of truth, and as himself is the God of *Order* and *Polity*; yea and the Churches cause is Gods as to that *prudential liberty* and *variety*, which his wisdome hath granted and indulged to it in the several parts or distributions of it, under the Gospel, as to the *circumstantial* or *ceremonial* rites of Religion, incident or annexed

nexed to the outward decency of worship and profession, in several ages and places, so as may most conduce to the planting, propagating, preserving, and reforming of true Religion among all Nations. 1 Cor. 14. 40.

Lastly the *unity* of the Church belongs to Gods *cause*, who is but one, and his Son one, and his Spouse one. Such as cause Schism and divisions in the true Church, by giving or taking unnecessary, and so unjust scandals, and thereby raising uncharitable separations, these are injurious to the God of peace, and the Prince of peace; *Nostrum laceratur in arbore corpus:* Christians tear God & rend the body of Christ in their Schisms, which divide them from the love of Christ, and for his sake of one another, which is the great Character of Christs Disciples. *Joh.* 13. 35. The Churches unity Gods cause. Rom. 16. 17.

§. Therefore all the Methods of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which were used in primitive times, by which to keep the *Catholick* Church in an holy *unity*, and brotherly *correspondency*, by *Bishops, Arch-Bishops, Primates,* Primitive Churches care to keep unity and charity among Christians.

*mates*, *Metropolitans*, and *Patriarchs*, yea and in latter ages when Christians were multiplied, by *Arch-Deacons*, *Suffragans* or *Chorepiscopacy*, (*i. e.*) rural *Deans*, and the like, were so far from being Antichristian projects and evil policies, that they were the Counsels and results of Christs spirit, as helps in Government, for the Order and Unity, Polity and Authority, meet to be observed in his Church.

§. Nor is it of any weight which some urge odiously and enviously against these subordinations, and degrees, fitted for the *unity of the Church*, (which capacitated them to meet and correspond as by general and lesser Councils, in several places, so by Letters communicatory in all the world) that hence the Papal arragancy and Pride, did get footing, and his prescripts became decrees.

Of abolishing things once abused.

For if all things of *piety* or *prudence*, must be abolished with the *policy* or *superstition*, (if man lists to abuse them) we shall leave very little to true Religion; So far *Popes*, and *Bishops*,

*Bishops*, and *Presbyters*, and *People* too have shewed themselves in many things to be but men, subject to prejudices, and passions; yet are they no way capable to destroy or deprave the true principles or practices of Christian wisdom, much less of *Divine* and *Apostolick institution*, either binding and perpetual, or prudential and occasional, which lawfully may be used, and are not rashly to be abolished.

4. Next the *Churches* cause, which is eminently contained in Gods, comes that of all *mankind*, as God is φιλανθρωπος, and σωτηρ παντων, the lover and preserver of men, in the way of civil societies, the *Hings* or *Axis*, and *popular points* of which, are *Justice commutative* and *distributive*, private and publique; the just God is concerned, that justice be done to all, and by all, according to their *place* and *station*.

4. The good of mankind is Gods Cause.

In civil justice. Isa. 59.1. Micah 6.8. 1 Cor. 6.8. Col. 3.25.

The rule and measure of all civil and Politique *Justice*, for matter and manner, for what is to be done, and by whom, for the equity of *retribution*, and authority of *dis-*

In settled Laws.

*pensation*, is that *custome* and law which is prevalent by publique consent in *every Nation*, not contrary to the Law of God; what ever is done contrary to this, is, *in Deo injuriam*; and makes the actors (*rei læsæ Majestatis divinæ* as well as *humanæ*) guilty of doing injury to the justice and Majesty, not onely of men but of God, whose are the laws and Polities, the Princes, Kings and lawful Magistrates, of every state, Kingdom and Commonwealth, which are Gods Ordinances, not to be resisted by tumult or armed force, by sedition or Treason without an high sin, which *subjects* men to *damnation*, as Rebels to *God*, as enemies to the good of their Country, to the duty they owe to parents, and indeed to the good of all *mankind*, who would soon be as miserable as beasts, and Devils, if they were not restrained from private *extravagancie*, preserved in their honest *enjoyments*, by the publique laws, and that Soveraigne power which is in Gods name and stead to enact and execute them.

In Polity and Magistracy.

Rom. 13. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 13.

Hence

Hence as the *just cause* of every man is Gods, who may say with *David* and others, *Psal.* 35. 1. *Plead my cause, O Lord*, &c. Though never so poor, mean and helpless, yet their cause must not be despised, or wronged and oppressed. God will avenge the meanest Subjects injuries against the greatest Princes or Potentates: so the cause of even subordinate Magistrates is Gods cause: But (above all) their cause is Gods, whom God hath placed as Supreme above all, in *Empires*, and *Kingdomes*, for the good of all: Certainly that of *I have said ye are Gods*, and, *Thou shalt not curse the Gods, or Rulers of thy people*, and that of *Touch not mine annointed*, and *do my Prophets no harm*. That of *David's tenderness to King Saul*, of *all* good mens subjection in all ages, *Jewish* and Christian, to their *princes*, though evil, persecutive and oppressive; those orders of Christ to *give to Cesar the things that are Cesars*; and so the Canons of the two great Apostles, S. *Peter* and S. *Paul*, to obey, to be subject,

8. Every private just cause is Gods.

The cause of Magistrates is eminently Gods.

Exod. 22. 28. Psal. 105. 15.

1 Sam. 24. 6. and 26. 11.

Mat. 22. 21.

1 Pet. 2. 13. Rom. 13. 1, 2.

by all means in all things, *actively* or *passively*, to Kings and all in authority, by whose safety the whole state is safe, if they be resisted or injured and destroyed, *Iliades* of miseries like torrents of blood usually break in on all sorts of people.

No friends to Gods cause who are enemies to lawful Magistracy.

Those divine Oracles besides the *Catholick, constant* and *eminent practice* of the primitive Christians (the best commentary on Scripture) when they wanted not numbers and armes, as *Tertullian* and others tell us, yet they never used other weapons then patience, prayers and tears, petitions and *Apologies* to the persecuting Princes; all those put together do shrewdly evince, that those men are no friends to, or assertors of the *true cause of God* who are not so, of settled laws and Government, of *Magistratick power* and civil *justice*, *of which not the* will and *power of man*, but the Law of *God in general*, and the particular *Laws, customs*, and *constitutions* of every *Nation* and *Polity*, are *Arbitrators* and *Judges*; What ever done

done or taught by *Prince* or *People*, contrary to these, under any splendid form, and *novel names* of *Arbitrary prerogative*, or popular liberty, or *high Justice*, is the *highest Injustice*, and done with an high hand (*in Dei contumeliam*) in affront to Gods *Ordinances*, and of Law, Order, Peace and Government for the good of mankind.

Of common principles of reason and liberty urged as Gods cause against *Magistracy* and setled laws.

§. Nor may any *Subjects* here fly by way of *appeale* to the common *Dictates* of reason, and loose principles of *natural liberty*, or I know not what *necessity*, after once by publique consent, they are limited and confined to the *inclosures* of *laws* and rules of *obedience*, either *active* or *passive*; To which God and mans Laws, oblige all men; otherwise there will be no quiet or setling in any State; for there will never want some whose discontentments or ambition, think the Laws themselves too strict and injurious, as to the liberties which are necessary to attain their designs, and fullfil their lusts.

§. All true Christians will rest either

either *content* or *patient*, being never so concerned in any worldly *momentary businesse*, as to sin upon the account of either *getting* or *preserving* it: They have enough while they can in Righteousnes and peaceful ways *possesse their own soules* in good consciences, which chiefly God and Christ, and the holy Spirit. Christians must be very insensible not to be content with *such Society* and *liberty*, which will not suffer them to want what is necessary for *life* and *godlines*.

Luke 12.19.

6. Gods cause is in every mans conscience.

After the *cause* of *publique Justice* and peace, which are a branch of *Gods cause*, every *private mans cause*, as to sin and grace, vice and virtue, good or evil, trouble or comfort, is Gods, so far as they are on Gods side and take his part against the evil of *World, Flesh, and Devil*; his word and spirit will plead for them, against Satan accusing and conscience condemning: against their fear and jealousies of God or themselves, against doubts, dejections and despaires.

The cause also of the *poor*, the

*fatherless* and the Widows is peculiarly Gods cause, which he is patrone to, and promiseth to protect them, if they trust in him; as he threatens their oppressors and despisers, that he will plead their cause against them, *Prov.* 22. 23.

The cause of the poor and fatherless and widows is Gods.

Pro. 31. 9. Iob 29. 12.

Yea *the cause* not only of good men but of *wicked men*, is so far *Gods*, as they have reason and justice *on right* on their side; they may not be wronged or robbed because they are *wicked* or *Idolaters*; God pleads the cause of *Nebuchadnezzar*, though an heathen, a persecutor and oppressor, against King *Zedekiah*; because of the *oath* and *Covenant*, which was in Gods name passed between them; So he did that of *Amurath* that great *Turk* against *Ladislaus* a Christian King of *Hungary*, when he violated the accord sworn between them, having from the *Pope* a dispensation for his perjury, which God never gives in lawful *Oaths*, as he never obligeth to or by unlawful ones.

The cause of every good is Gods.

Ezek. 17. 19.

9. True *Religion* binds us to such as are *irreligious*, to *Heretiks*, to *Mahometans*

*hometans* and to all; it is a damnable divilliſh and *Antichriſtian Doctrine*, that to them (much more to Chriſtians) no faith is to be kept, that they have no civil right to any thing: That they are *Egyptians* and may be robbed: or killed by ſuch as fancy or call themſelves *Iſraelites*, *Moſes's* or Saints; God hath given the *earth to the children of men* as ſuch, in *natural* and *civil* ſucceſſions, not as to his *Children* and *Saints*, by grace and *Regeneration*; God hath *better things* in ſtore for them in Heaven, which who ſo believes, will never by fraud or force, and ſo by way of ſin and in juſtice, ſeek to ſhark and ſcramble for theſe earthly things, which God gives as a portion and reward ſometimes to wicked men, and is indeed their all that they deſire or expect from God.

Pſal. 115. 16. Heb. 11. 40.

7. The cauſe of every good creature is Gods.

Laſtly *every creature* is ſo far included to the *cauſe of God*, as it *hath his Stamp* and *Character upon* it. The abuſing of them to *ſin*, *riot*, *luxury*, *cruelty*, is the Gods diſhonour, as if he made them for

no better *use* and *ends*. *Veneranda est, non erubescenda natura*, as *Tertullian* speaks; *God is to be reverenced in all his works, and not reproached*; The not owning God in them, not blessing him for them, and not serving him by them, makes the users of them impleadable at *Gods Bar and Tribunal*; *Redde rationem*, *Redde deprosum*; Give an account of the Corn, and Wine, and Oyle, the Silk, and Flax, and the Wool; the *beauty*, *strength*, *estate* and *honour*; *time*; *wit*; *learning*, and all other *enjoyments*; *Non hos quæsitum munus in usus*: as they are not ours by *merit* or by *making* the least of them, so Gods *action* lies against us for every *one* of them, if abused, or not used as lent us by him, who is *Lord Paramount* in chief above all, of whom we have and hold all things in *Frank Almoinage*, as so many *Almes* or *Beadsmen*, Tenants at will, and only by the courtesie of the grand Lord, being less then the least of his mercys, as *Jacob* humbly and ingenuously confessed. It will be eternally

Hos. 2. 5.

Gen. 32. 10.

eternally *inculcated* upon wicked men; with repeated torments, not onely as to their *injustice* to God and man, (*discite justitiam moniti, & non temnite divos*) but as to that which was said to the *rich* soul, Luke 12. 20. whose are all those good things now, whose will they be when thy soul is taken from thee? enjoying neither thy self, nor any thing, since thou enjoyest not God the chiefest good of all. And that, Luke 16. 25. *Son remember thou enjoyedst thy good things in thy life time*; not as Gods, but as thine own, and as thy chiefest goods, which made them evil to thee, both as to sinning then, and to suffering now. But I have done with the first particulars, shewing you, first, that God hath his cause in this world; and what this cause is, in the particular instances of it.

2 General. How and why the cause of God oft needs his pleading.

The second General Quere I proposed, was, 1. How the cause of God comes to stand in need of his *pleading*. 2. And why the Lord in his providence permits it to come to

to come to such *losses, low ebbs* and distresses?

1. If we consider that *cause of God* which is on foot in all the world among all Nations, according to what of God and his glory is made known to them by the *works of his power, wisdom, bounty* and *providence*; also by those *innate* and self-demonstrating *principles* of right reason, which remain in mens hearts, as the measures of Justice, rules of chastity, sobriety, veracity, humanity, and the impulses to some religion, that is, agnition and reverence of the *Divine Majesty*; even this *common cause of God in nature*, may stand in need of his *special pleading*, by the great *degeneration* of people, when they have *generally corrupted* their ways, so that they are *turned beasts, monsters, devils* in pride, lust, oppression and cruelty in contempt of all *true Religion*, in *professed and practised Atheism*, and its giantly consequences, prostituting all things to debauchery and villany.

In the great degeneracy or corruption of mankind as to common principles of reason and Religion.

2 Pet. 2. 12.

Rom. 1. 24.

§. Here

§. Here the *righteousnes of God from heaven* is usually so *revealed* by the way of great *judgements* upon such persons, people, and Nations, by *war* and *famine*, or *plagues*, or *inundations*, or *fires* or *earthquakes*, that the remnant may learn to *fear God*, and do no more so presumptuously. So when the *Old world* had polluted it self in all sensual *seditions*, and *Cyclopick villanies*, God rinsed the earth with a *flood*, and washed the whole *race* of mankind, *like dung*, *from the face of the earth*; except eight persons, one *righteous Noah*, and his *seven relations*; God makes even Heathens and Idolaters as he did the *Athenians* to acknowledge there is (ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ) *an unknown God*, who is too hard for all their Idols; too wise for their policies, and too just to be either deceived or despised.

Gen. 6. & 7.

Acts 17. 23.

§. Thus *Gods cause* was driven to a necessity of some judicial and extraordinary *pleading* against those *proud and presumptuous builders* of *Babel*, who fancied to ascend (ἐις οὐρανὸν) above the reach of a *future*

Gen. 11.

*flood*,

*flood*, forgetting that God had not only *Seas* and *waters* to bring upon them from the great deep, but thunderbolts also and fire from above to cast upon them, as he did upon *Sodom* and those other Cities who burning with unnatural lusts (the effect of high feeding and idleness) were made the fuel of everlasting flames. Gen. 19.

So when the sins of the *Canaanitish Nations* were *ripe*, and their *measure full*, God brings in the *sickle* of the *Israelites swords*; a Nation which of all in the world they would not have feared or suspected, having lately been under hard bondage in *Egypt*, and their spirits so infinitely cowed, that being Six hundred thousand fighting men, they durst not make head against their accustomed Masters, the Egyptians; yet by these did God plead against the abominations of these mighty Nations which cried to heaven for vengeance, even to an utter extirpation of men, women and children, beyond all pitty and sparing. Gen. 15, 16.

5. So in *humane histories*, we shall still finde such remarkable instances of

of Gods Justice, making Nations punish one the other, by dashing them against each other, by bringing some *desolating judgements* upon them, that mankind might still preserve some fear of the *Divine Majesty*.

Dan. 4. 14. 5. Thus he brings the *Median* and *Persian* power under *Cyrus* and *Darius* to hew down the great tree of the *Babylonian pride and Monarchy*, when *Balthazzars* sacrilege grew so impudent, as to use the holy vessels of Gods Temple, to measures for his *drunkenness* and *excess*.

After this, when the *Persian Monarchy* was dissolved to excessive *luxury* and *tyranny* under the last *Darius*, God brings the *Grecian sword* by the conduct and valour of *Alexander the Great*, to mow down those *Eastern Nations* by thousands and ten thousands, yea by *hundred thousands* in a few years.

6. When the *Grecian Princes* which set up for themselves, in their several shares of that *Macedonian Empire*, in *Persia*, in *Egypt*, in the lesser

lesser *Asia*, and in *Greece*, when these were debased to all vile affections and actions, against the principles of their own *Philosophy* and *Divinity* (to which they pretended.)

Then did the *Lord* stir up the fourth *Beast*, the *Roman Empire*, with Iron *Feet* and *Teeth*, to tear, devour and trample, all the others power and glory, their riches and dominions. As all private judgements are Gods *pleading* against *single persons*; so *Epidemick miseries* do proclaim some publique *indignities* and *extraordinary* injuries offered to the Divine Majesty, contrary to those principles of reason justice and Religion, which were known among them; their very *light* being *turned into darkness*, and the bounty of God, to all manner of *wickedness*; when his blessings to them had in vain been witness of his goodness to them, he comes as a swift witness in storms and tempests of desolation, against them; which none could withstand, or escape; as is to this day oft seen

Dan. 7. 19

Matth. 6. 23

even among *Mahometans*, *Tartars*, *Chineses*, and *Indians*.

2 In the Churches great d- pressio s.

Secondly, Since the Church of God is more peculiarly and eminently *his Cause*, under his special care and cognisance, the chief *Quære* is, how this comes to need Gods *own immediate pleading*.

1 By heathenish persecution

1. By open *enemies*, *persecuting*, *opposing*, and many times utterly *oppressing the Church of God*, as *Vultures* or *Eagles* seising on *Pigeons*, or as *Lions*, *Bears* and *Wolves*, on *Lambs* and *sheep*.

Against the Church of the Iews

So when the Church of God grew from a family, to the Nation *of the Jews*, and were owned by God as his *peculiar people* and concern above all the world, all the world was generally against them, and sought not onely to despise but destroy them as *gentem exitiabilem*, a vile and execrable Nation, as *Tacitus* terms them: So *Pharoah* first and the *Egyptians* held them under hard *bondage*, till they were weary of life, as well as of their *burthens*; there was none to plead their cause, *but God*, who did it at last to pur-

Exod: 5

pose,

pose, with an high *hand*, and *out-stretched arm*, confuting *Pharaohs* Pride and obstinacy (with the *Egyptian Gods*) in the red Sea; when no other miracles in lesser drops would soften their hard hearts, he soaked them in such *great waters*, as quite *drowned* them.

After this, how oft was the little flock of Gods Church, as a *speckled Bird* in the Wilderness, surrounded with Enemies, as a *Lilly* among *Thorns*? there was *Gebal*, and *Ammon*, and *Ameleck*, the *Philistines* and they of *Tyre*, the *Assyrian*, *Arabian*, *Egyptian*, all were against them; from not onely reason of State, but of *Religion*, where different principles make the most *deadly antipathies*, and *desperate fewds*.

Ier: 12. 9
Cant: 2. 28
Psalm 83. 11

Thus the wild *Bore* sometimes with power, other while the subtil *Foxes*, of *Mungril Jews*, and half *Idolaters*, with sly insinuations, sought to pull down and waste the peace, honour, plenty, safety, and Religion of the Jews.

Psalm 80. 13

Thus the *Heathens* raged, and their *Princes* set themselves against

Psalm 2. 1

the *Lord* and his *cause*, fulfilled that first prophecy of an *irreconcileable enmity* between the *Serpent and the seed of the Woman*; All the gods and *Demons*, all the *Oracles* and *Priests*, all the *Poets* and *Prophets*, all the *Orators* & *Historians*, all the *great Princes* and

1 Cor. 1

*valiant Soldiers*, and *subtil Polititians* all the *Wise men* and *Philosophers*, set themselves to despise, to reproach, to oppress, and *extirpate* the *name* and *Nation*, and *Religion of the Jews*, (which was that of the true God,) from under Heaven, as a most *pestilent people*, and of a most *detestable superstition*.

Persecution of Heathen against the Church Christian

Afterwards when the *blossoms* of *Judaick ceremonies* fell off, and in the fulness of time the ripe fruit of *Messias* came into the world, in *spirit and in truth*, that all Nations might worship the true *God* aright, in every place, without confinement, I need not tell you (who are not ignorant of Scriptural, and *Ecclesiastical Histories*) how from

John 4. 24

Matth. 2

*Herods* malice and subtilty, seeking to destroy *Christ* in his *cradle*, and satiating his defeated malice (like

a worrying Wolf, or raging Bear, with the massacring of so many innocent children (who were ever esteemed by the antient *Church*, as *Infant-Martyrs*) suffering in Christs stead, and upon the first occasion of *his cause* pleaded in the world, by the baptism of their own blood, until *Constantine* the *Great's* days of refreshing and rest for a season) the *true Church* and *cause of God* was never out of the *furnace of tribulation*, martyrdoms, fears, afflictions, and dayly deaths: true, the *bellows* did not always *blow* up the fire and fury of men to the same flames, but there wanted not those, as *Decius* and others, who envied Christians their numerous, cheerful and speedy *Martyrdoms*, of which they were so *ambitious*. Rom. 8. 36.

§. Nothing was more *wonted* in the mouths of the people, than, what they clamored against, *Polycarp*, (a primitive Bishop of *Smyrna* in S. *Johns* days) *Tolle Atheos*, away with these *Atheists*, and *Christiani ad Leones*; Christians were thought such beasts, that they

were onely fit to fight with, and to feed Beast; or to be baited in Beasts skins; Yea *nomen*, *crimen*, (as *Tertullian* obserues) men were so mad against them, and gnashed
Acts 7. 54 *on them*, as the Jews *against S. Stephen*, that they would not examine their *cause* or crime, thinking it accusation enough, that they owned themselves Christians.

5. *Diocletian* makes such havock (as *Decumanus fluctus*) after others, that he not onely cut up the *harvest*, but raked the *gleaning* of Christians in all the *Roman Empire* (even so far as here in *England*, where S. *Albanus* and others were Martyred) that he *gloried* and *triumphed*, and set up *Trophies* for the *extirpation of the Christian superstition*. At this *dead lift* was the Church of Christ and *cause of God*, when the Bishops of the *Churches* were banished, or Butchered; the *Presbyters* starved, destroyed, and scattered; The Oratories and *Temples*, or *Churches* all *demolished*, or put to prophane *uses*; the Christian people condemned to the *Mettals*, *Islands*, *Prisons*, *Limekills*,

*Limekills*, *Racks*, *Gibbets*, and *Fires*.

Thus did the cause of *God* as to the Christian Church stand, or rather fal, for the first three hundred years, under Heatheninsh *Persecutors*, and the oppositions of *Philosophy*, or *science* falsely so called, which yet afterward came to naught, as all power and polity will at last do, which set themselves to oppose the cause, the truth, the Church and servants of the living God.

The Churches depression by Hereticks and Schismaticks.

Thirdly, After the *Church* had some rest in *Constantines* time, by the suppression of *Heathenish fury*, and *Idolatrous folly*; yet was the *cause of God* not without its following conflicts, by reason of *Hypocrites*, *Hereticks*, *Schismaticks*, *false Apostles*, *Hucksters of religion*, *deceitful workers*, *Wolves in sheeps cloathing*, who delighted to divide and destroy, to shake foundations, and shipwrack consciences, to lead *Disciples after them* by factions, partialities, and respect of persons, either darkening the verity, or dividing the unity, or defacing the

Gal. 2. 4.
2 Cor: 2. 17
Act: 20. 29, 30

uniformity, or destroying the *authority*, or confounding that *order* and *subordination* which Christ and his Apostles left in the Church of Christ; men full of *lusts* and *pride*, daily spawned innovations in the doctrine, or in the faith, or in the customs, and in the forms of Religion.

5. Such were all those pristine *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*, whose *names* and *deeds* deserve to be buried with their damnable doctrines, and uncharitable *factions* in eternal forgetfulness; they are too many and too odious to repeat: I would to God they were not digged up out of their graves in our days by some carrionly συμφορίχοι, who searching the graves, and raking the kennels of old errors, seek to fill the *English world* with such odious, noysom and unsavory spectacles both of opinions and practices.

6. Who that is learned can be ignorant of the prevalent numbers and powers of the *Novatians*, *Arrians* and *Donatists*; what petulancy and cruelty they used against

the *Orthodox Cause*, challenging the Cause and Church of God wholly and only to themselves; what despite they had against St. *Cyprian*, *Athanasius*, St. *Cyril*, St. *Hilary*, St. *Augustine*, *Optatus* and others, that opposed, routed and confounded their contumacious impudence? Thus was the Cause of Christ one whole age or century, like *Noahs Ark*, floating in a deluge of *Arrian perfidy* and persecution, to its own grief and astonishment, till God took the matter into *his own hand*, and pleading the Cause of Jesus Christ, and his eternal Godhead against both people, and Bishops, and Emperors, that were infected with that pestilence; for the *inundation* of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, the *Huns* and *Heruls*, the *Gauls* and *Daci*, seemed no other but the fountains of the *great deep*, broke up to wash away with *humane blood* the *blasphemies*, with which the Christian world was then polluted, against the glory and honor of the *Son* and *Spirit of the blessed God*; when times were such that

men

men would not endure *sound doctrine*, but heaped up teachers, and clucked together Councils and conventicles according to their own lusts and interests, without any regard to the primitive Faith, and practice of the Church of Christ, which was so zealously tender for the Cause of Christ, that they loved not their lives unto death, but rather chose (*mille mortes*) a thousand deaths, then once to *crucifie again, or deny the Lord that bought them.*

2 Tim: 4.3

4 The Churches decline by corruption of manndrs among true beleivers

Fourthly, The *Cause of God may need his special pleading*, by reason of the *great corruption of manners*, which like weeds grow in the *garden of God*, or as *tares* in the field of the Church, which was first sown with good seed. Thus as *Eusebius, Salvian, Suspitius-Severus* and others observe, Christian Religion suffered more by the *evil lives of Christians*, then by the *malice of persecutors*, or *Hereticks*; men that had sound heads as to doctrine and Faith, yet had *foul hearts*; their *brains* good, but their *breath, lives*

Matth: 13.25

and

and *liver* were naught. This *contagion* sometimes seised *Pastors* and *Flocks*, by *idleness*, *pride*, *luxury*, *vain pomps*, and superfluous *ceremonies*, by secular *policies*, uncharitable *actions*, and scandalous *practices*, so far as made the *Cause of God*, and the name *Christ to be blasphemed* and abhorred by many; while they could not reconcile the holiness of Christians faith and doctrine, with the *solecisms* of their sordid actions, and shameful lives.

The darkness and decay of the western Churches under Popery.

Hence came over the *Western Churches* that thick *Egyptian darkness* for many hundred of years; in which religion was made up for the most part with *Images* and *Pictures*, with *beads* and *latin prayers*, with repeated *Pater nosters* and *Ave Maries*; which people understood not, nor the *Priests* many times; with *Purgatory*, *Masses* and *Indulgencies*, with infinite superstitious ceremonies, and empty formalities, besides idle fables, and vain janglings, which like *heaps of chaff* had buried the good *wheat of Gods*

*floor*,

*floor*, and the glory of divine institutions, to make way for Monastick superstitions, Idolatrous adorations, and Papal usurpations, which were built on the *flatteries* of some, and the *fedities* of others, who easily dispenced with the honor of marriage, when they had so cheap pardons for those extravagancies and impurities, in which many lived, under the *vail* of *celibacy*, but far enough from pure, unspotted, and unviolated virginity.

6. To this *Augean stable* was the Church of Christ and Cause of God brought, by the depravedness of Christian manners, by the rust and moss of superstition, before the *Reformation* began to *dawn* in this *western* World; An *hundred grievances*, were at once complained of, many confessed, some for very shame reformed by even those of the Roman party, who with infinite blood-shed in former ages, fought (under the Notion of *holy Wars*) not only against *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Sarazens*, but against good, at

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least tolerable *Christians*, who might have their *errors* and *fayling* in some things, but it is sure they kept nearer to the primitive piety, purity, and patience, both in faith, administrations and manners, than did their proud and merciles destroyers; who eat up those, poor Christians, as bread, and turned their cruel *Croisadoes* to crucifie their brethren, breaking their fast sometimes with 20000. of the poor *Albigenses*, *Lugdunenses*, *Waldenses*, *Berengarians*, *VVickleſites*, *Huſſites*, *Bohemians*, and others; proportionably were their dinners and suppers when the Popes flatterers and vassals had a mind to fall upon them.

5. Yea, and at this day (even among the reformed Churches) the *purity*, *simplicity*, *honesty*, *charity*, *modesty*, and *equanimity* of *Reformers* is so abated and wasted by the *pride*, *animosity*, *bitterness*, *sacrilege*, *rapines*, *cruelties*, *ambitions* and *covetousness* among *Protestants*, besides their endless factions, under pretentions of reformation, immoderations, novellizings. 5 The decay of the reformed Churches

vellizings and confusions. That the *Cause of God*, as to the true reforming of religion and just protesting against Romish errors and enormities, is brought very low as in other places and Churches, so in *England*, which was the greatest *beauty, honour, stability, refuge* and *safety* of the reformed Religion and that cause *of Christ* which hath been so learned and valiantly pleaded by the Clergy and Layty, the Princes and Parliaments, the *Martyrs* and *professors*, reverend Bishops and learned Presbyters, against the Roman Usurpation, *superstition, Sacriledg*, and *Idolatry*, which are (without doubt) so far *Antichristian*, as they are clearly against the *Doctrine, example* and *institution of Christ*, besides the judgment and practice of his primitive *Churches*.

9. Even this cause (I say) is now sick and ashamed of it self, so decayed, disparaged, and divided, that it is next *degree* to being *destroyed*, and *despised* by all, unless *God arise* by some extraordinary way

way of his providence to plead and assert this his own cause of a just and due *reformation*, against the factious policies and Fanatick fallacies of unreasonable men, whose (ἀμετρίαι) immoderations and transports have marred all by their King killing, rapine and sacriledg, unless God arise to judge the earth.

8. Nor is this the first time that *God* hath helped this Church and the *Reformed Religion* at a *dead lift*; for so it was in *Queen Maries days*, when the reformed party made conscience not to rebel against their *persecuting* Soveraigne Princess, when her persecution was according to her perswasion and conscience, yea they pleaded and *asserted* her civil rights, committing the *cause* of their *Religion* and *Reformation* to God, with their loyal souls and consciences in well doing and patience: There did God arise in his due time, and do his own works in his own way, to the great honour of the reformed *Religion*, which had first the crowns of so many *Martyrdoms* on its head,

1 Pet. 4.19

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without the least *spot* of civil *Tumults*, *Wars*, *Seditions*, or *Rebellions*, on the hearts or hands of the reforming *Clergy*, and reformed *people*.

§. By which *prepostrous method* of latter years, mightily cryed up and carryed on by some men in order to reformation of *Religion*, not onely *Religion* is become *retrograde* many degrees, if we look to the *Dial of Gods word*, and the primitive, Christians practice, as it pretends to be reformed; but even as it is Christian too; that is, the Doctrine and imitation of a crucified, not a crucifying *Saviour*: The lines which some men have drawn as the measures of their Doctrine and deeds, are very excentrick and wide, as to the wonted centre of God's glory, the circumference of Scripture truth, and that strait rule of charity by which these two were wont to meet in the *conscience* and *conversation of good Christians*.

1 Per: 3 18

§. Nor will either *Christian Religion* or *just Reformation* appear in their true beauty and honor, while these

these are so far at distance and separated from each other, that either verity and charity, patience and subjection; truth and peace are wanting in the ways of Christians.

In the close of this second general *Question*, it is fit to answer that other branch of it also, Why God so wise, so potent, so good, so gracious, so compassionate and so vigilant for his *own Cause*, that is his Glory and great Name (which is so much bound up in his Churches welfare) yet suffers it many times so far to *run to lapse*, seeming ruine and despair in the eyes of the world, in the triumphs of his enemies, and in the despondencies of his servants; that they give all for gone, save only a little hold and hope they have in their prayers, and in the precious promises of God, to whom nothing is impossible or hard that is worthy of him, and *who is a present help*, both inward and outward, *in time of trouble*, when his time of help is come?

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1 Particular, Why God suffers his cause to lapse

The Reasons of Gods permitting

his *Cause* thus to lapse for a time, as silent and unconcerned, or as not seeing, nor regarding the *low estate of his Church*, may in brief be these.

1 To shew the malice that is in mens hearts

Psalm 50. 21

1. To let wicked men see what is in *fundo cordium*, in the bottom and lees of their hearts, if they be let alone unpunished and unrestrained to the very dregs of their malice, what a perfect enmity and hatred they have to *God and his Cause*, which is his *Truth, Word and Worship*, yea every grace, and vertue, or good work, yea all rules of justice, good laws and decent order in Church and State; that as the *thoughts of their hearts are onely evil and that continually*, so will the actings of their lives, if left to themselves.

2 To try and exercise the graces of the godly

1 Pet. 1. 21
Iames 1. 2, & 4

2. For the trial of his grace in those that are *upright in heart*, and on Gods side, that their *prayers, faith, zeal, patience, perseverance*, and *Christian courage*, together with their love to God, and charity even to enemies, with their compassion for the Church, may be manifested:

ed: Hence (as St. *Paul* tells us 1 *Cor.* 11.) God permits *Heresies*, and *Apostasies*, and *Schisms*, to rise and *prevail in the Church*, yea and many sinful, at least superstitious corruptions in doctrine and manners; that by such trials the sounder sort may be *approved*, who in the hour of temptation persevere without shipwrack of faith or good conscience, either in their judgement or conversation, which is still such as *becomes the Gospel of Christ*.

3. God permits these *lapses and oppressions of Religion*, to punish by penal *induration* and *blindness* the obstinate and presumptuous sinners, who gratifie their immoralities and lusts, by their errors and Apostacies, letting them alone to *add sin to sin*, and *to fill up the measure of their iniquity*. Hence they are given up *to strong delusions, to beleive fables, and speak lyes in hypocrisie*, because they *with-held the truth in unrighteousness*, and loved the darkness of sottish superstition and confusion, more then the truth and power, pu-

3 To punish the malicious by penal hardning

Hosea 4.17

2 Thess: 2. 11

2 Tim: 4.4

Rom: 1:18

Joh. 3.19

rity and order of Religion.

4 To purge away the dross of his gold

4. The *Cause of God* is many times under *great depressions*, that by such *fiery trials* God may purge away the dross of such as are for the main sincerely good; but yet gradually lukewarm, too secure, too sensual, too carnal and worldly, too self-conceited, and self-seeking; they are cast into the furnace of affliction to wean their affections from the fleshly and sensual world, to prepare them for death, and a better life, by a nearer conformity to Christ in his cross, that they may not think the greatest reward of Christian piety to be had in this world, that they may embrace (*nudum Christum & crucifixum*) Christ with the cross as well as with the crown.

5 To give the world presages of an after judgment and pleading. Psalm 73. 19 and 31. 16 Isai 3. 11 and 66. 24

5. Lastly, It is *magnum præjudicium futuri judicii*; an evident token of after *judgement* and future recompences, which shall reward the patience and perseverance of the godly, with a crown of glory, and the wicked after all their prosperous oppressions with the

the fruit of their own ways, by the impreſſions of divine Juſtice, in the *ballancing of eternity.*

3. The third General Head is, *How God pleads his own Cauſe*; 1. *Immediately*, by his own ſpecial appearing for it againſt his and his Churches enemies. 2. *Mediately*, by ſuch inſtruments, as he ſtirs up to be on his ſide. 3 General, How God pleads his own cauſe

1. God hath his pleadings in ſeveral Courts. 1. *In foro conſcienciæ*, in that Court of conſcience which is within men; ſometimes God pleads againſt them there, filling them with terrors and ſtupors, with horror and inquietude, as in *Cain* (thoſe *ſurda fulmina & ſecreta fulgura*) thoſe ſilent thunders, and unſeen lightnings, which make them ſelf-arraigned, accuſed, convinced, judged and condemned in *interiori tribunali*, at the bar or tribunal of their own breſts, as were *Joſephs* brethren when they came into trouble, and were more afraid then hurt; yet guilty conſciences 1 More immediately in the Court of conſcience againſt us

are afraid of a leafs shaking, and their own shadow: *There is no peace (saith my God)* that is no true, well-grounded and constant) *to the wicked*, as such; they are as *a restless sea*, not only foaming out their rage and fury *against God*, but filling and fowling themselves with *mire* and *dirt*; *Prima est hæc ultio; quod se Judice nemo nocens absolvitur*; thus the heathens found and owned that the accuser, witness, judge, condemner, and tormentor, which every wicked man had in his own soul, was of all most inexorable and intolerable. *Pœna autem vehemens*, &c. *Nocte dieque à suum gestare in pectore testem*, yea *pestem*; that they seem sometime quiet, jolly, merry and secure, it is but as a puddle of fowl water, which stinks the more it stands still, or as a warm gleam before a smart showre; these are the *sharp indictments* in mens own souls, not *verbal pleas* onely, but forked arrows, and *poysoned darts*, which drink up their very spirits, as so many furies, or (*animarum hirudines*) leeches of their souls.

Isai 57.21 and 48. 22

2. Other times God pleads his *own Cause* in the *Court of conscience*, for us, and in our behalf, in troubles, doubts, darkness and desertions; when by the evil of times (as *Eliah*, *Jeremiah*, *Baruch*) we are dejected, or by the evil of *temptations*, buffetted and tossed as St. *Paul* in a long and dismal storm, that we *see no light*; there the promises and Spirit of God pleads for us, crying and *making intercession* with us, commanding us to lay *hold on his strength*; God furnisheth us with strong reason, bidding us plead with him, and urge his own name, and glory and goodness, as *Moses* did to disarm an angry God: He then puts us in mind of Christs merits, who is our righteousness, of Gods free gift, of pardoning *sin for his own sake*, of the *Law fulfilled*, of the *no condemnation to them that are in Christ*, of his *not quenching the smoaking flax*, or *breaking the bruised reed*; These and the like are Gods gracious pleadings in us and for us, when we can say nothing for our selves; as a *Judge* that turns *Advocate* for a

2 God pleads his cause in our conscience for us.

Isa: 40. 10

Isa: 41. 21

Exod: 33. 12

Rom: 8. 1

modest and *penitent prisoner*. God stops the *mouth* of the great accuser the *Devil*; Christ answers for us all doubts and objections, all debts and indictments; they are paid and cancelled by his rich and gratuitous grace.

3 God pleads his cause before all the world by his providences Psalm 58. 11

3. God pleads his Cause many times *in foro seculi*, by the visible *instances* of his *special power and providence*, which makes all men to see there *is a God that judgeth the world*, who is neither *deaf nor dumb*, neither *negligent nor impotent*, only *patient and long-suffering* toward his adversaries, that they might see they *had space of repentance*. Here, the pleadings of God, when he ariseth *terribly to judge the world*, and to *ease him of his adversaries*, and to plead the cause of his oppressed Church, are most worthy of the divine majesty: For

Isai 1. 24

The nature of Godspleadings in the world

1. They are most just in themselves. 2. They are most pregnant and convictive in mens consciences, as the pleas of God. 3. They are unavoidable, and irrisistible, and potent. 4. They carry the *cause* (at last)

laſt) againſt all oppoſition; the *higheſt cedars* are feld by it, the greateſt mountains levelled: Gods Cauſe like *Moſes* his ſerpent devours all thoſe Enchanters and Magicians. 5. They are impartial, without *reſpect of perſons*, great or ſtrong, rich or noble, wiſe or fooliſh, few or many: God ſometimes ſo pleads it, as to pour contempt even upon *Princes*; to pull down the *mighty* from *their ſeats*, to confound their *counſels*, to break the arm *of their ſtrength*, to lop off all their *branches*, yea to *ſtub up their roots*, as to their poſterity and renown, which was done againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Haman*, *Balſhazzar*, and *Judas*.

Againſt the greateſt and higheſt Princes

Pſalm 107. 4

Sometimes God pleads his cauſe even by *miraculous appearings* in ſigns and wonders, full of terror and deſtruction; ſo againſt *Pharoah* and the Egyptians; ſo againſt *Senacherib* and his hoaſt, ſending a deſtroying *Angel to confute in one night his blaſphemous inſolency*, by ſlaying the greateſt part and flower of his Army, ſending him away with ſhame, which was followed with the parricide

Miraculous pleadings of Gods cauſe

Iſai 37. 39

ricide of his *two sons*, *who slew him*; So in privater cases, God pleads against *Miriams* murmuring, by lepro-sie; so against *Nadab* and *Abihu*, by fire; So against *Korah* and his mutinous complices; God wrought *a new way* of burying them alive, *Numb.*16.33. So against the pride of *Herod*, whose popular diety was confuted by *worms*, *Act.*12.23. Sometimes God fills his enemies with *Panick terrors*, and makes them *sheath their swords in their own bowels*, to become executioners of his vengeance; yea and we read *Achitophels oracular wisdom* ended in a halter; even so let all perfidious and impenitent *Polititians perish O Lord*, that are enemies to thy Cause, in true Religion and just Government. Sometimes God stirs up *unexpected* and *despicable enemies* against them, who kindle such fires of intestine or foraign wars, as consume his proudest adversaries, as in the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, when they forsook and rebelled against God.

Isai 37. 37

Judges 7. 22

Gods pleas impartial

When God ariseth to *plead his own*

*own Cause*, he fears the *face of none*, he spares none; not Families, or Cities, or Nations, or a *whole world* (as in *Noahs* days) or the whole race and nature of *mankind*, as in *Adam* and *Eve*, who fell under the *curse*, with their posterity, when they beleived and obeyed the serpent more then God: Against some he pleads with fire, famine, pestilence, evil beasts, War, Deluges: Nay he spared not the rebellious Angels, but cast them out of heaven, into *hell fire*, from the light of his blessed presence to *chains of eternal darkness*. Gen. 3 Ier. 15. 3 2 Pet. 2. 4

Nay God spares not his own *servants*, *People* and *Church*; he pleaded sorely against *Davids sin*, which argued his *despising of God*, when he preferred *his lust*, and caused the enemies of God to *blaspheme all religion* and grace, by the scandal of his extravagancy; God shews us that as Saints may sin, so he sees sin in them, and will not let it go unpunished. Gods pleadings against the sins of the best men, as *David*, &c. 2 Sam. 12. 10, 5

5. So he pleads against *Eli* and his sons, even to their untimely death, 1 Sam. 3.

and

and the extirpation of that family from the honor of *Prieſthood*: So againſt King *Uzziah*, for his *ſacri-*
1 Kings 15. 5 *legious* intruding on the *Preiſts office.*
1 Sam. 15. 23 So againſt King *Saul* for his rebellion, *which was as witchcraft.* So againſt King *Solomon* when his *wiſdom left him*, or he left it, and fell
1 Kings 11 to ſo groſs a folly and effeminacy, as to countenance and tolerate Idolatry, in an uxorious vanity and in-
Isai 29, 5 2 Kings 20 conſtancy; So againſt King *Hezekiah*, when his pride made him forgetful of ſo great a mercy, as his miraculous recovery and delivery.

4 Gods pleading againſt the ſins Nay God pleaded oft (againſt the whole Church of the *Jews* in their *Apoſtaſies*) the Cauſe of his Law, Worſhip, Service, and Servants, the Prophets *whom they ſlew*, by cutting them ſhort, by pulling down, and abaſing the *crown of their glory*, by giving their adverſaries dominion over them to deſtroy them, to burn their Cities and Temple, to deſolate their Land, to lead them into captivity, and ſo to give the Land its *reſt and Sabbath*,

which

which they had prophaned: Thus did he oft plead the controversies he had with that Church and people, that City and Sanctuary, which was called by his *own name*, with whom at last he reckoned for all the blood of the Prophets, and that of the Messias too, which filled up the cup of *Gods wrath* against them, to *an utter desolation*, which hath held now for near *sixteen hundred years*. Matth. 23. 35

In like sort did the *Spirit of God plead his Cause against the famous seven Churches in Asia*, and their *Angels* or Bishops, of which we read in the second and third chapters of the *Revelations*, reproving and *threatning* them sorely, both Fathers and children, Bishops and Presbyters, Pastors and people, except they did repent. So against all the Greek and Eastern Christian Churches, whose heresies, luxuries, schisms, ambitions and hypocrisies have at this day put them under the *Mahometan bondage and tyranny*, that they have scarce *now a name* to live as Christians or Churches. Gods pleading against Christian Churches

5. Nor

5. Nor was *God wanting to plead his Cause by many terrible judgements* against the depraved state of these *Western Churches*, when overgrown with *Image-Saints*, and *Angels-worship*; with *Tyranny and superstition, with covetousness and ambition, with sottery and debauchery*, even from the Popes or cheif Bishops chair, to the *Princes, and Peers, and Clergie, and Gentry, and people* of all sorts; how were they tossed too and fro in the *factions* of *Gnelphs* and *Gibelins*, wasted in the *holy Wars*, as they called them; terrified with *excommunication* and *bans*, that there *was no peace to him that came in, or to him that went out.*

2 Chron: 15. 5

Lastly, God sometimes *pleads his Cause* (and gives evident token it is his) by an *unexpected way*, even by suffering it to fall into *fiery trials*, and many temptations; not as offended with his Church, but as giving the world experience of the *mighty power of his grace*, and the eminent *faith, courage, patience* and *constancy* of his servants, who love not their lives to the death; but can

5 Gods pleading his cause by persecutions
Phil: 1

Rev: 12. 12

set

set all the loss and dung of this world at stake *for Christs sake*: So the primitive Martyrs and Confessors, Apostles and others *glorified God*; So many *Bishops, Presbyters, Virgins young and old*, filled the *world with admiration* of that *cause*, for which they were so resolved and undaunted, that their pious perseverance (as *Justin Martyr* and others tell us), with their (*ἀνυσία*) pertinacy, as *Marc. Aurelius* calls it) was a most powerful way to commend the *glorious Gospel of Christ to the world*: Thus the blessed company and holy Hoste, after Christs example, did assert the *cause of God and his Christ*, not by armed forces fighting, but by sober preaching, and patient suffering: This *Spirit of glory* was a riddle (indeed) and new way to advance the *Evangelicall cause*, against the powerful oppositions found on all hands, yet it was Gods way and prevailed, by the power of his *Word*, and the testimony of his *Spirit* of patience and glory which rested on them. 1 Pet. 4. 14

§. As the first foundation stone of

of the *Gospel* or *Church* of Christ was laid in *John Baptists* and Christs blood, so it was after builded up by St. *Stephens*, St. *James* and their followers: Then Christians, like *Parthians*, fought flying, and prevailed by not resisting, and were more then *conquerors* when they were most conquered; the blood of *Martyrs* being the seed of the Church, and their ashes as the compost or mendment of the world.

Rom. 8. 37

4 General, Gods immediate pleading his Cause by men.

Fourthly, It remains that I shew how God pleads his and his Churches Cause, not always by miraculous and immediate instances, but by the *mediate instruments* of his ordinary providence; whom he stirs up to protect, to favour, to speak comfortably to his *Sion*, that *his warfare is finished*, that the *days of refreshing are come*; such were some good or tollerable Kings among the Jews, *Asa*, *Uzziah*, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*; such was *Constantine the Great*, and some other following Emperors, that were Christian and orthodox too.

By pious Princes.

Isai 41. 2

Acts 3. 19

So

So since the *Reformation*, God hath given (specally in these British Churches) Kings and Queens to be *Nursing Fathers and mothers* to true Religion, *Defenders of the true Faith*, and the *Professors* of it, who had long ere this been *martyred* and *burned*, *butchered* or *massacred*, *blown up* and *extirpated* as Hereticks, if the *Romish Sea* had not had bounds of national Laws, and soveraign power set to it, which said *Hitherto and no further thou shalt go*; here thy *proud* and *threatning waves* shall be stopped: I pray God we have not sinned away our *defence and glory*, making breaches upon the banks of our *Laws*, *Government* and *Religion*, so wide as will let in at last that over-flowing scourge again upon us, under the names of *Liberty*, *Toleration*, and *Super-reformation*.

Again, God pleads his *own cause as to true Religion*, by furnishing his Church, First of the Jews with extraordinary Prophets; such as was *Moses*, *Samuel*, *Eliah*, *Micah*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel* and others,

till the Messiah came; After the Apostles (*who were Master-builders*) God gave to his Christian Church such Heroes of learning, zeal and courage, as in all ages undertook all those *Goliahs* and sons of *Anak, who defied the host of God*; such of old were *Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clemens*, the *Cyrils*, the *Basils*, *Chrysostom*, *Epiphanius*, the *Gregories*, the great *Athanasius*, St. *Augustine*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Hilary*, *Optatus*, *Prosper* and others, during the heat of heathenish, and heretical or schismatical persecution; And this not singly onely, but socially, *junctis viribus*; in Councils or Synods, which were *Ecclesiastical Parliments*, either greater or lesser, in several *Dioceses* or *Provinces*, or National or Oecumenical of all the Christian world; by their *Pastors and Representatives*; these did mightily plead the *cause of Christ* against heretical *novelties*, and schismatical *partialities*; these kept the faith and peace of the true Church intire; these guided, gathered and healed the *erring*, *scattered*

By Councils and Synods.

*tered* and *worried* of the flock; these by many hands made *walls* against the *seas* and mighty *floods*, which the devil cast out of his mouth against the *Woman* cloathed with the sun; the *Church professing Christ*. Rev. 12. Thus the famous Council of *Nice*, so pleaded the cause of Christs Divinity, that they crushed the *Arrian Serpent in the egg*, and gave that *cockatrice* its deadly wound, which it never recovered, though it made a foul strugling a long time: So the Council of *Constantinople* pleaded the *cause* of the Holy Ghost, against the cavils of *Macedonius*: So the Council of *Ephesus* pleaded the unity of Christs Person, God and Man against *Nestorius*: And the Council of *Chalcedon* the distinction of his Natures, against *Eutyches* his confoundiug of them; so in other cases, as the *cause* of God and his Church required, Councils were soveraign *Physitians*, and applied excellent cordials, till they came to be servile to the *private causes*, lusts, power and interests of men, and less intent to the Word and Spirit

of Christ (as the first Council of *Jerusalem* was, which ought to be the pattern of all after Synods.)

Gods pleading in the reformed Churches.

And afterwards in the eclipse, decline, superstition and darkness of times in the Western Churches, yet there were not wanting some that did still plead the *cause of God* as his witnesses, against the *Apostacies, extravagancies* and *luxuries* of the Romish tyranny and pride. So was St. *Bernard, Nicolaus, Clemangis, Alvarus-Pelagius, Wickliff, John Hus*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*; our *Lincolniensis Baleus*, and others.

Yea when God arose mightily to shake this *Western world*, and to *rack* us off from our *Monastick* and *Roman lees*, who can sufficiently muster up the armies of Worthies, both abroad and at home, of *reverend Bishops*, and other *learned Divines*, who have either stood in the gap with their arms, or at the bar with their strong arguments, pleading *Gods cause* by Scripture and antiquity, by *learned writings* and *holy lives*, against all *oppositions*: I will name none, because I will not seem

parti-

partially ſilent to the merit of any; This only I may without envy ſay, none have exceeded the *worthy Biſhops*, and others of the Reformed Church of *England*, who were and ever will be in *impartial judgements* eſteemed among the firſt therein; and the headmoſt ranks of *Martyrs*, *Confeſſors*, *Reformers*, *Preachers*, *Diſputers*, *Writers and Livers*, while we were happy to enjoy ſuch Fathers and ſuch Sons of this Church, as *were worthy* to enjoy thoſe *favours* and *Honors*, which this Nation heretofore grudged not to confer upon them, and *abhorred to take from them*, and their Epiſcopal Order, which was excellently martialled and imployed by worthy Biſhops, as *Jewel*, *Uſher*, *Andrews*, *Davenant*, *Morton*, *Prideaux*, *Hall*, *White*, *Bilſon*, *Babington* and others; Alſo by *Hooker*, *Willet*, *Sutliff*, *Rogers* and others of the Preſbyterian ſubordination.

5. Tis true they *were all men*, and ſo might have their infirmities more or leſs; but they were ſuch men of *might and weight*, and of *valour*

and *renown*, that (with all the *grains* of *allowance*) they far out-weighed all that popular ſtuff or pomp of either learning or vertue, gifts or graces, Scholarſhip or Saintſhip, which hath *ſwelled* their adverſaries, rather then *filled them*, with any *real truth*, or *ingenuous worth*, comparable to them: And however now (indeed) the Reformed Church and Religion of *England* doth look like an *Army*, that hath been ſo *harraſed* and *routed*, as it hath loſt moſt of its gallant commanders, which gave *life* and *courage* and skill to the *whole Proteſtant party*, and the cauſe of the Reformed Religion; yet we muſt not deſpair but that God will return in mercy to us, if once our lives and manners be but as reformed as our doctrine was; this needeth not, though the other do, reforming.

Gods pleading at the day of judgement

§. And becauſe there will be failers and infirmities on the beſt mens part in *pleading Gods cauſe* in this world; therefore to make amends there is a third Court, wherein God

God will (unavoidably) plead his cause against every evil doer, and all nakedness in the world; this will be in *foro poli* or *cæli*, at the last day, when the books of *Omniscience*, *conscience* and *Scripture* shall be opened: and mens sins, with their *wilful*, *immoral* and *impenitent errors* shall be set in order before them; Then the *great Accuser within* and *without* shall be *heard*, and sentence given *secundum allegata & probata*, according to the merit and evidence of mens works: This is the last *appeal* of the oppressed *righteous cause*, whether it shall be heard, and have right done it: For then, as St. *Bernard* tells Judges, and Juries, and Lawyers, *Omnia judicata rejudicabuntur*; All judgements and causes shall be reviewed and rejudged. Revel. 6. 9 and 20. 12

5. But the consideration of such Instruments, as God is pleased to stir up to plead his cause in this world, Leads me to the last particular, which is to shew the manner and method (*legitimi litigandi*) of mans pleading, as becomes him, 5 The right method of mans pleading Gods Cause.

him, this holy *cause of God*, when he is called to it in an ordinary (which all are) or extraordinary way, as some may be.

5. It is not only the work of God to *plead* his own cause (as *Joash* said of *Baal*, *If he be a God, he can and will plead for himself*) But it is the duty of every good Christian that loves God, to be a *worker* and *pleader together with him* in Gods cause and way; we must be all willing to be retained on *Gods side*, to be his *Advocates* and *Attorneys*, when he calls us to this work, to contest for God against an evil, perverse, and adulterous generation; either by *living or dying*, by *doing or suffering*, by *preaching or disputing*, by *discoursing or writing*.

Judges 6. 31

Of pleading Gods cause by fighting.

It will be demanded, why I add not by *fighting?* which is now much cryed up, and used by some, as a most speedy and effectual way to *plead Gods Cause*, and set up Christs Kingdom.

I answer, The *cause of God* is sometimes to be pleaded by the way of fighting.

1. In defence of any *Church* and State, against unjust and *foreign invasion*, or intestine rebellion and sedition.

2. By way of a Princes relieving his oppressed Subjects and Confederates in *other States* and *Dominions*.

3. By way of asserting the proceedings of *Justice* as to *Law*, according to that power which is established in any *Kingdom* or *Polity*.

4. As to the *Cause* of Religion; it is no further to be *asserted* by the *sword*, then as it is established by the Law, and under the protection of the *Soveraign Power*; there to plead its cause by such a *Sword*, as is the sword of *God, and of Gideon*, lawful, when it is done by *lawful command* and Supreme (which is in *England*) Regal Authority. Judg. 7. 18.

Of Religion to be asserted by the sword.

Otherwise no *Cause of God*, as to Religion, is to be either planted and propagated, or reformed, or vindicated by the *sword* of Subjects against any Princes or chief *Magistrates* will and power, in whose hand the *sword* is: True, God by a special Prophet, and a commission from

from Heaven, confirmed by many miracles, did once put a ſword into *the Jews hand*, to make their way againſt thoſe Nations, which were declared by Divine Juſtice worthy to *be deſtroyed*. But the *Evangelical* ſpirit *is not* of that temper; the *Commiſſion* of the *Goſpel*, and Chriſts *Spiritual Militia*, by which he conquers the World, is not to *fight*, and kill and ſlay; but to preach, to pray, and to ſuffer. They groſly miſtake Chriſts *Kingdom*, and Gods *Cauſe* now, that fancy it is to be pleaded by the *Arm of Fleſh*; by popular *furies* and *forces*, by tumults and violences; by ſubverting and oppoſing *Magiſtratick* power, and breaking over the boundaries of good Laws and Cuſtoms, *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical*.

Luke 9.55.

Mark 16.15.

Mat. 26.52. 0196. Chriſt commanded *Peters gladiatorum forwardneſs* in his defence, to *put* up his *ſword* into *his* ſheath. Chriſt had two other *ſwords*, of the *Word* and *Spirit*, which were enough to do *his work*; not by *Souldiers*, but *Miniſters*; not by *Colonels* and *Captains*, but by *Biſhops* and *Presbyters*.

There

There are other ways to exercise a Christians love, zeal, and courage for *Gods cause*; which as it is most worthy of our pleading, so we must take care to *plead it* Θεοπρεπῶς, and χριστοπρεπῶς, as becomes our Lord and Saviour. It is a *caution* which *Quintilian* a great *Orator* gave to all *Pleaders*, *Cavendum ne bonam causam male litigando perdamus*: Many men are untowardly forward to plead *Christs cause*; like hot mettal'd and heady horses, neither well *mouthed*, nor well *wayed* and managed: They endanger more by their *rashness*, then they *advance* by their capring *activity*.

The *Cause* then of God must in times, places, and points, be pleaded so as becomes the *Majestie*, Truth and Honor of the *great God*.

1. Νουχῶς: Wisely, with *understanding*; by the clear and potent *demonstrations* of it; grounded on the *Word of God*; not by *humane fancies*, wilde *notions*, and *extravagant presumptions*, and fanatick fetches: The Word of God is able to *make* us *perfect pleaders of his Cause*. Gods cause to be pleaded by men. 1 Vnderstandingly. 2 Tim. 3. 17.

We

We must not adde to, nor detract from that παντοπλία, compleat armour, offensive and defensive: If any
Isa. 8. 20. *plead* not according to *that rule* of *Law* and *Gospel*; of *Faith* and Loyalty; of patience and *obedience*, it is because there is no *light* of *truth*, or grace of humility in them. Gods Cause needs no *cavilings* nor sophisms; no *wisdom* or *eloquence* of mans *invention*, which is to joyn humane fraud and force, meer froth and folly to divine sufficiency: As if one would muster up Frogs and Mice, with their bulrushes, to joyn with Angels in Gods battels, to help the Lord against the mighty.

2. Sincerely. 2. Gods cause is to be pleaded by man ἁπλῶς καὶ εἰλικρινῶς, *sincerely*, for *Gods sake*, not for *self-ends* and *interests*, for our glory, gain, or advantage, as to our *persons* or *parties*, our secular and civil interests of power and preferment; which are many times the dead *flies* cast into this
2 Kings 10. 16. *precious Ointment*; as *Jehu* did, whose ambition was the *bellows* and blazoner of his *zeal*. So they that preached

preached the Goſpel out of *Envy* and *ill will*, or for filthy lucres ſake, to ſerve *their bellies*, and not the Lord Jeſus; to pleaſe *men*, and not *God*; ſeeking not the ſalvation of ſouls, or the *good of the Church* and State, but their own *emoluments* and *preferments*: Theſe are in all ages the greateſt deformers of Chriſtian Religion, expoſing it firſt to popular fury, and after to the ſhame and contempt of all. Phil. 1. 15. Tit. 1. 11. Gal. 1. 10.

3. Gods cauſe muſt be pleaded ὁλοκλήρως, *Integrè*, ὁλοκλήρως, ſolidly and entirely; not picking and chuſing what parts, or points, or duties of it moſt ſuit with our *fancies*, *opinions*, parties, deſigns, deſires and private *intereſts*: We muſt not ſo plead for the firſt *table* in *piety*, as to neglect the ſecond in *equity* and *charity*: So to contend againſt ſuperſtition in Gods worſhip, as to overthrow the order and decency which ought to be ſolemnly obſerved in it; or that duty and obedience we owe to thoſe which are in Church or State called Fathers, and to whom we ſtand obliged by the 3. Entirely.

firſt

first Commandment with promise? We must not so plead or urge our duty to God, as to skip over our *duty* to our *neighbour*; nor so plead against *Idolatry*, as to indulge *Sacriledge*; or against *Adultery*, as to acquit *Murther*; or so cry up *Religion* or Reformation, as to encourage *Rebellion* and *Sedition*: Nor may we so inculcate and insist on one duty, as to omit and slight *others*; to be meer *Euchites* for prayer, or *Acoits* for *hearing*; or (Ἀλλοτριεπίσκοποι) Pragmaticks, impertinently and irregularly busie in Church and State, as to neglect the *Sacraments*; or to be so eager in dispute for Truth (even the *minora veritates*) as to forget the (μεγαλεῖα θεοῦ) great things of God in which the Kingdoms of the Gospel consists; so magnifying faith, that we omit good works; and crying down ceremonies, to the overthrow of all orderly and uniform Devotion; to cast out Commandments, Lords Prayer, Creed, and all settled Liturgy out of the Church.

4. The

4. The Cause of God must be pleaded by us, ὁσίως, δικαίως, and νομίμως, *holily*, *justly*, and *lawfully*; according to our place and duty; after a righteous manner, also peaceably and orderly: Nor (μετὰ βίας καὶ ὑβρεως) *violently*, *rudely*, and *injuriously*: This is the first thing God requires of us, to do *justice*, and then to shew *mercy*, and walk humbly with him. Extravagant *motions* mar the *cause* of *God*, and rather prejudice it, then any way plead it: We must not *commit Robbery* to *do Sacrifice*; nor *lye* or *oppress*, upon *Gods account*: We must not be so far partial to *Gods Cause*, as *to do evil that good may come thereby*; this is to turn the *staff* of *Moses* into a *Serpent*: The great care of the Apostles was, to have *Mysteries* of Religion made good by *Moralities*. Cardinal *Poole* well expressed, that those would best understand the eleven first Chapters of the Epistle to the *Romans* (which are full of high mysteries and disputes) who did most practice the five last, which exhort to holy life; teaching such

4. Holily, and justly, or lawfully.

Micah. 6.8.

Isa. 61.8.
1 Pet. 4.15.
2 Pet. 2.2.
Rom. 3.8.

as

as believed well, to do *all* things *well*, that the *Cauſe* and *Name* of God might not be *evil ſpoken* of.

1 Pet. 3. 12. We muſt not violate the good laws of *civil Societies*, under pretence to exalt the Law *of God*; nor run Church and State into *confuſion*, to ſet up Reformation of either in ſeditious ways. Gods *Cauſe* needs not the Devils *engines*; either plead it as *becomes* it, or let it *alone*. It will ſupport it ſelf, without the raſh hand of *Uzzah* to ſtay it: If thou canſt not plead it *actively*, thou mayeſt do it *paſſively*, and much more to purpoſe, as *primitive* Chriſtians did, then by any *inordinate activity*: *No man*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that ſtriveth, is crowned, unleſs he ſtrive lawfully: Secundum leges Athleticas*, ſuch as the ἀγωνοθέτης, the Inſtitutor and Umpire had appointed.

2 Tim. 2. 5.

5. With moderation and diſcretion. Phil. 4. 5.

5. Gods Cauſe muſt be pleaded μετ' ἐπιεικείας, with *moderation*, *diſcretion*, and *calmneſs*; ſo as not to ſuffer any tranſports of paſſion and precipitancy to overſway us, to an (ἀκρισία) *exceſs* or *indecency*: We muſt not ſo plead

plead againſt ſuperſtition, as to reproach or weaken true Religion; or againſt humane corruptions, as to vacate and voyd, Divine inſtitutions; or againſt the *abuſe* of things, as to aboliſh the good *uſe* of them: to have no *Our Father*, becauſe we would have no *Ave Marys* in our Prayers.

§. *Reformation* muſt not run to the ruine of Church, or the riot of State; as if a Phyſitian ſhould deſtroy the body with the diſeaſe, purging away the ſpirits with ill humors, ſuch as their former methods ſeem to be, who will have no Biſhops according to the *primitive* and *Catholique* order of the *Church*, becauſe ſome *Biſhops* in after times had their *fauls* and *frailties*; or no Miniſters, becauſe ſome of them have been too blame; or no Sacraments, becauſe ſome may be unworthy *receivers*: Theſe as *immoderations* and *madneſſes*, become not thoſe, that undertake to plead Gods *cauſe*; It is like

theirs who would ſtarve themſelves, becauſe ſome have been gluttons, or deſtroy all *Vines*, becauſe of ſome mens *drunkenneſs*, or have no ſinging, becauſe ſome may ſing out of tune; it is an ordinary error in men to ſuffer their *pleas* to paſs from the *cauſe* to the *perſons*, and ſo from the *perſons* to the *cauſe*, which *tranſports* of *envy* and *anger*, ariſe from the *overboyling* of mens *paſſions*, which waſts their *judgments*, and make them inſtead of *ſnuffing* dim *candles*, to put them quite out; an error that I fear hath been too prevalent in ſome mens ſpirits and *practiſes* among us; whoſe *meaning* and *intentions* poſſibly might be good, or at leaſt not ſo bad as the event.

6 With Chriſtian courage and magnanimity.

Sixthly, *Valiantly* and *courageouſly*, ἀνδρικῶς καὶ μεγαλοψύχως, according to the *generoſity* and *magnanimity* of a true Chriſtian ſpirit, which is rather *good*, then great; or therefore great becauſe good; not by a *military robuſtneſs*,

and

and *boyſterous forwardneſs*, or childiſh pertinacy, that reſolves to maintain any cauſe they once ingage for; but ſuch a *cool* and ſober *valour*, as firſt hath made a juſt *conqueſt* of our ſelves, as to all *irregular* paſſions, inordinate luſts, & oblique deſignes; that being liſted in Chriſts ſpiritual *Militia*, and having given our names to him, we may put on that *ſpiritual armour*, which becomes a Chriſtian in truth, faith, love, zeal, patience, juſtice, ſobriety, ſanctity, and conſtancy, for theſe are the ſolid grounds, and ſure guides of a *Chriſtians* courage in *Gods cauſe*; whoſe *ſacrifice* might not be offered with ſtrange fire, or ſtrange incenſe, nor may his *cauſe be pleaded* by *brutiſh valour*, or by turbulent paſſions. For that were like baking the *ſhewbread* of the ſanctuary *with mans dung*, which the Prophet Ezekiel ſo much *abhorred*, and deprecated. Exod. 30. 9. Lev. 10. 1.

Seventhly, Gods cauſe muſt be pleaded by us χριστιανῶς, becoming

Christ and Christians, who are persons under the severest restraints of any men, with *modesty*, *gravity*, *humility*, and due *respects* to our *betters* and *superiors* befitting their place *authority*, and dignity: So the ancient *Martyrs* and other *confessors*, (in their *Apologies* petitions and Remonstrances, as *Iustin Martyr*, *Tertullian* and *others* presented to the *Emperors* or *Senates*) owned them with *due honour*, and payed that reverence to them which their dignity required, and Gods word either commanded or permitted. They never used *rayling accusations* against them; nor *spake* evil of *dignities*, to set a gloss and soyl on their good cause, no not in their greatest agonies, in their *ἀγωνία* when they were dying, and suffering, as well as disputing, preaching, or writing; they blessed those that cursed them: and prayed for those that spitefully used them; This gave repute to the *Cause of God*, and shewed the spirit

With respect and modesty to superiors.

2 Pet. 2. 11. Iude 8.

Mat. 5. 44.

rit of God was in them of a truth: they did not ſpeak but act great things, and if they could leſs diſpute, they would yet readily dye for that cauſe, which was delivered to them by the Pillar and ground of Truth, the Church of Chriſt.

Secondly, χαριτῶς *Charitative*, with charity to all ſorts of people, pittying their *blindneſs* and barbarity, in meekneſs of wiſdom inſtructing them, as holy *Polycarp* did, fervently and humbly *praying* for them, yea, (*oſculando proditorem*) even kiſſing our betrayers, and deſtroyers, as *Cryſologus* obſerves of Chriſt: not behaving themſelves as *vermin* in a trap or wild *Buls* in a *Net*, but as *Lambs* and *Sheep* of Chriſts *Flock* and *Mark*, who opened not his mouth, ſave onely to pray for his *crucifiers*; as alſo did the firſt Martyr S. *Stephen*, whoſe name imports the comfort and crown of his thus ſuffering for *Chriſts Cauſe*: not as an *evil doer*,

2 With charity and compaſſion to all men.

1 Pet. 2. 23. Acts 8. 32.

Acts 7. 60.

1 Pet. 3. 16.

or an *evil ſpeaker*, ſome mens ſtomacks are ſo full of *Choler*, gall and *virulency*, that they do not plead for *Gods cauſe* ſo much, as *ſpit* and *ſpue* upon it; when pretending high zeal and godlineſs, they ſo foully diſgorge themſelves in ill language againſt their ſuperiors and betters every way; no Magiſtrate no Miniſter eſcape their dirt and mire; All are Beaſts and Antichriſts, and Satans and Enemys, and fit to be deſtroyed, that do not comply with the cauſe they look to ſet up (together with themſelves) by pulling down all that *ſtands* in their way.

Of rude and riotous pleading Gods cauſe

§. What ſcurrilous and *ſcandalous Libels*, haye ſome men made, like the *waſt* and *filthy* papers of *Martin Marprelate* and others of that bran, to wrap up their ſeveral cauſes in; what undecencies, what barbarities, what ſedities, what furies what menaces, have their *Sermons* and *Prayers* abounded with? and ſo their actions, by a ſuperfluity of

ſelf

ſelf conceit, paſſion, pride, arrogancy, envy, deſire of revenge, and the like enormous diſtempers? ſo far beyond a Chriſtian, that they would make a modeſt and ingenuous heathen bluſh, and abhor any cauſe that is pleaded or managed by ſuch poyſonous pens, ſuch polluted lips, and unwaſhed hands.

§. I may truly ſay with St. *Iames*, my *brethren theſe things ought not to be ſo*, theſe are not the methods of Chriſtians pleading their Gods and Saviours cauſe, either bitterly to *rail* like *Rabſakeh*, or pompouſly to vapour and flatter like *Tertullus*, crying up every *cauſe* as *Gods*, that is uppermoſt, either in *power* or in popular *applauſe*, or vulgar pitty, which are no true *Touch-ſtones* of *Gods cauſe*, either as to *civil Juſtice*, or true *Religion*. Iames. 3. 10.

And thus (O *worthy* and Chriſtian *Auditors*) have I finiſhed the *demonſtrative* or *doctrinal* part, which ſhewed firſt, the nature of Gods

*cauſe.* Secondly, the manner of pleading it, and Thirdly what method we muſt uſe in our pleading it; ſo as to obſerve the holy laws and orders, which become our reſpects to the *cauſe of God*, and to our Superiors, yea, to all men: whoſe rules are his written word rightly underſtood, not wreſted and depraved by ſiniſter paſſions and preſumptuous diſpenſations of what is our duty indeed to God and man.

I will not *abuſe your patience*, while I crave the uſe of a little time, to feel how the pulſe of *your affections* and *reſolutions* do beat, and whether *your underſtandings* have tranſmitted the cauſe of *God* to your heart, that knowing your duty in ſo great a concern, you may reſolve to do it.

1 Vſe to direct us to the beſt cauſe that is to be pleaded.

1. Vſe of *inſtruction:* to ſhew us what is that cauſe which is moſt worthy our pleading, with all the wiſdom, power and capacities we have; it is Gods. For this *cauſe* as

John 18. 37.

Chriſt

Christ speaketh, he came into the World, and into the bosome of the true Church; for this cause we are endowed with understanding, memory, eloquence, conscience, civil influences in Counsel and in authority; publique and private: for this cause we were baptised by the *Blood of Christ*, and dedicated to him, sutably educated and instructed; also nourished and refreshed by his *body* and *blood*, that we should plead *for Gods glory*, for our *Saviours truth*, Worship, *Ministry*, *servants*, and *institutions* against our own *lusts* and *Passions*, against the ignorance, *Atheisme*, *prophaneness*, *licentiousness*, *hypocrisie*, *novelty*, *extravagancy*, *error*, *superstition*, *idolatry*, *Flattery*, *sacriledge*, and *security* of the world. It is a shame for us to be so *zealous industrious*, solicitous and *importune* in our own petty *concerns*, for a little profit, honour, or pleasure; and to neglect that *cause*, which is worth all we are and have, even our *estates*

*liberty*s

*liberties* and *lives*, *Nec propter vitam vivendi perdere causam*; if we expect God to plead ours we must plead his, and with a vehemency as much above all other *causes*, as *heaven* is above *earth*, eternity above a moment, and the excellency of Christ above the loss and dung, the *scraps and excrements of this world*.

3 Vse, Caution to plead Gods cause in Gods way.

2. Vse of *Caution*; but as we must be careful to adhere to, and assert *Gods cause*, so it must be in *Gods way*, with *Iustice*, holiness, order, humility, patience, charity, sincerity, according to the bonds of Gods and mans laws, not with tumult, violence, faction, sedition fraud, fury, partiality, injustice and hypocrisie; Gods *Ark* though it totters must not be stayed or held up by such rash hands; better it do *honeste cadere*, then *inhoneste stare*. These *Midwives* are not fit for the birth of Gods children; Such as call in the assistance of these, either *mistake Gods cause*, or they make

his

his cauſe but a *ſtale* and *viſard* to their own private intereſts and *deſignes*; or laſtly they are ignorant of Gods *methods*, and the way of his *ſaints* in all ages; or they greatly diſtruſt his *power* and *goodneſs*, as if he were not ſufficient to vindicate himſelf and his cauſe, by ſuch means as are onely worthy of him, of Chriſt, and of us as his ſervants.

3. Vſe of *trial* and *reproofe*, you may ſee *clearly* what *cauſe* they plead, who obſerve not Gods courſe and *method*, but think to juſtifie evil pleading by the goodneſs of the cauſe. To ſuch violent injurious, perfidious, and unreaſonable men, we may put that queſtion which God *doth*, *Pſalm.* 50. 16. *What haſt thou to do, to take my cauſe into thy hand, or my word into thy mouth, ſince thou hateſt to be reformed, &c.* On which words they report that *Origen* after his lapſe, commented with his *tears*. Of miſtakers and miſpleaders of Gods cauſe. Pſal. 50. 16.

Thoſe

Thoſe that *plead Gods cauſe* any way by *fighting* or *writing*, ſpeaking or doing, muſt have *written in their hearts*, and affections on their *forehead* and *hands*, as the Horſes in *Zacharies* viſion had on their *bels* or *bridles*, *holineſs to the Lord*; St. *Chriſoſtome* obſerves in the diſorders and corruptions which diſtracted, with *exſtatick convulſions* and *madneſs* the heathen *Sybils* and *Prophets* in their *Oracles*; and in the calmneſs or harmony, which was in Gods *Prophets*, how great a difference there is between *Diabolical poſſeſſion*, and *divine inſpiration*; ſuch is the diſorder that attends men in their own *cauſe*, and the order, which they obſerve, *who intend* Gods. There was wont to be *proclaimed* before the *olympian games*, and *Athletick agonies*; That none who were misbegotten, or *ſlaves*, or *vile* or *infamous perſons*, ſhould offer to enter the liſts, or conteſt, in thoſe famous and ſolemn, yea *ſacred conflicts*, which were

Zach. 14. 20.

not

not for private gain, but for the honour of their gods, and the Victors; such a proclamation may I make, as to Gods *cause*, ἐκᾶς ἐκᾶς ἔστε βεβῆλοι, let no proud, prophane, covetous, ambitious, sacrilegious, perjurious, popular, partial, parasitick, insolent, disorderly and licentious persons pretend to plead it, since they do more prejudice and disparage it, then any way advance or forward it; good and wise men are ashamed, and *weak* men are jealous and affraid to be seen in that *good cause*, wherein wicked men appear (not good but great sticklers) as *Magots* do in what was a good dish of meats; not to garnish or adorne it, but to *defile* and *devour it*.

4. Use, *fear to oppose Gods cause*, or by any forcible or fallacious ways to plead against it, for it will be as a burthensome stone, a rock of offence, who ever *dasheth* against it, or on whom it falls at last, with the weight

4. Vse of Terror, to such as oppose Gods cause. 1 Pet. 2.8.

weight of Gods vindication, It will dash them to pieces; who *ever contended against* God and his cause, and prospered? For it will at last be pleaded with fire and brimstone, with an omnipotent and unexorable justice, which will consume as fire doth stubble, all the opposing powers, and fallacious pretensions.

5. Use of exhortation when we have done our duty in *Gods cause*, and in his way, according to our place, and see that we profit nothing as to the publique, but onely to our own peace and discharge of *good consciences*; yet cease not to follow God with our *prayers*, and holy *importunities*, that he would take the matter into his own hand, *Bonæ causæ sufficit unus patronus bonus*, *Gods cause* is never to be despaired of; though it have no patron or advocate among men, yet it hath one above who is *optimus & maximus*, the greatest and best of all;

5. Use, of exhortation, and comfort in the lowest ebb to plead Gods cause by our prayers.

Pl al. 119. 126.

It

It may (as a bladder) *be forced under water*, for a while, but it will *buoy* up again: The Church may be as the ſhip in which Chriſt was toſſed and covered with waves, yet *Chriſtum vehit & cauſam Chriſti*, (as *Cæſar* ſaid to the fearful *Mariners*, of himſelf and his *fortune*) God oft lets things run to low *ebbs*, that he may ſhew his mighty power, and make the extremities of his cauſe the opportunities of *his help*; however let not thy faith or *Prayers* faſt, which have a kind of omnipotency in them, to remove Mountains, and to do *miracles*, at a *dead* lift; Gods *arme* is not ſhortned, though mans be withered: let God alone with his own cauſe, the gates *of hell* ſhall not prevail againſt it.

6. Vſe, Meaſure not the *cauſe of* God by outward prevailings and proſperities; the gayeſt *feathered fowl* are not the beſt meat; we muſt condemne the *generation of* Gods

6. Vſe, not to meaſure Gods cauſe by falſe rules.

*people*,

Pſal. 73. 15. *people and the cauſe of the righteous*, if we think that the *worſt cauſe*, which hath the worſt *uſage or* ſucceſs in *this world*, look to the *Prophets* from righteous *Abel* to *John Baptiſt*, look to the *Apoſtles* and the beſt of their *ſucceſſors*, look to the holy *Preachers* and people, we ſhall find they had always enough to do to plead the cauſe of God and his truth, againſt the many open perſecutions and ſecret underminings of evil men and devils; who many times ſo prevayled by Gods juſt judgment, that the *cauſe* of God ſeemed wholly *routed*, ſuch were their powers, their victories, their numbers, their policies, their cruelties, all bent againſt the *cauſe of God*: yet, even their baniſhment and priſon, and tortures, and *plundrings*, and *ſequeſtrations*, and loſs of all, even to life it ſelf, theſe with a good *cauſe, and a good conſcience*, were infinitely to be *preferred* before all the Treaſures, and Triumphs, and Thrones, and

*ſucceſſes*,

successes and applauses of impious prosperity or prosperous impiety. The just must live by faith not by sense; the touchstone of *Gods cause* is *Gods word*, both as to the end, and the means the usual badg or mark of *Christs cause* is *Christs cross*, to which we were all devoted in our baptism: nor must we fly from those colours, least the *Lord answer us*, as those that plead with him at the *last day*, have we not prophecyed in thy name and cast out Devils &c. So have we not pleaded *thy cause O Lord by tumults*, *mutinies*, *falsities*, *sedition*, *rebellion*, by *plunder* and *rapine*, by *sacriledge* and *perjury*, by *blood* and *violence*; To whom the Lord will reply, *depart from me ye hypocrites, and accursed, I know you not, you pleaded the cause of your own lusts and belly, of your pride, envy, covetousness, ambition and revenge, and not of my holy name*, and true Religion, and reformation, which owns no such manner of pleading or praising.

Heb. 3. 4. Rom. 1. 17. Mat. 7. 22.

The use of examination by putting two Questions.

7. Vse, Is by way of examination, wherein I will propound two *Questions* to you, with such answers, as I conceive may suit them.

1 Quest. what is the cause which God thus pleads against us in England.

1. *Question is*, What *may be that cause of God*, for which he thus pleads in wrath against us in *England*? So far that his hand hath been a long time stretched forth against us, and his wrath is not yet turned away *from us*, but burnes as a *consuming fire*, to the very foundations, in a long *war*, and the worst *of all*, a *civil war*, which destroys even humanity it self, setting nearest relations at distances, and friends at distances, and neighbours at enmity, and countrimen at mortal contentions. Yea, and this upon the worst *accounts*, even religious dissentions and jealousies no less then secular; if we ask why the Lord hath brought all this evil upon a *people*, that were once called by his name, and but too happy, the very wonder joy or envy of all

*Churches*,

Churches, and *Nations*, and *Kingdomes*; Why is it that the Lord hath *pleaded thus* severely, against our *Kings* and *Princes*, our Parliaments and Peers, our *Bishops* and *Clergy*, our Gentry and Commonalty even all sorts of people, against Church and State, against our peace, our laws, our government, our liberties, our estates and our plenty, against the prosperity, and the *honour* of the *Nation*, yea against our very Religion, and reformation it self, as if he did abhor us, So that we seem condemned to everlasting torments, to contend with, and devoure each other, with *endless desolations* and *confusions*, turning like *Ixion* in the wheel, or *Sisyphus* his stone, or St. *Laurence from* one side to the other, upon the *gridiron* of dayly exactions, vexations, terrors and vastations, while *Manasseh is against Ephraim*; *and Ephraim against Manasseh, and Iudah against both*; That we cannot find or will not follow *the way of peace*. With

*Quære what cause it is*

what *Earthquakes*, and *Shakings*, and *Overturnings*, and *bloody Battels*, and *mutual Exhaustings*, and *unplacable Animosities*, have we been wasted many years, and are still *threatned* every day, besides the bitter feuds and factions, the divisions and subdivisions, which like fire have seised on the *Temple* and *House* of *God*, this so famous Church, and our *reformed* religion, heretofore so blessed with piety and peace, gifts and graces, with the beauty and holiness, and the crown of double honour; against all which God hath written bitter things and powred contempt.

Gods controversie with the Land. Hos. 4. 1. Jer. 25. 31.

5. These frowns and fightings do all testifie to our faces, that God hath a controversie *with the land*, against Church and *State*, that he pleads as an *adversary* against *Court* and *City*, and *Country*, against all *estates* and *degrees of men*; Among whom such an evil spirit is risen, as *between Abimelech*, and the men of *Sichem*, that there is no peace

Judges 9. 23.

to him that goes out or comes in; we are left as sheep without a sheep-herd; as a ship in a storme, without a *Pilot*; as Orphanes without a Father; and as Widows without an Husband, in a *desolate, deplorable, self-destroying condition.* Of which *abysse* or *ocean* of troubles, we see no bounds or bottom, being condemned to an *arbitrary subjection*, to a partial monopoly of power, and to a meer *military protection*, in which not *Philosophers* (as *Plato* wished) but Souldiers and men of blood, must be our Governours, and our exactors, our Protectors; Who keep us quiet that they may fleece us, and fleece us, that they may keep us in subjection, of whom we shall find that true, which is said of *Physitians*, many of them are but a further *disease* to a *Patient*; *qui medice, sic qui militariter vivit, misere vivit*; It is but a *sad life*, which must be maintained by dayly *leeches*, and *bloodlettings*, by *lancings* and *sear-*

2 Chron. 15.5.

ings and cuttings of some parts of the body which are not so unsound, as those that are the executioners of them.

Gods long and sore pleading against us.

5. Certainly God is too *wise*, and too indulgent a Physitian, to use so long and so great *evacuations*, *purgations*, and *corrasives* to this *body politique*, if there were not many foul and *morbose* or *malignant humours* in it: the *Heathens* were wont in publique and long Calamities after they had tried all ways to appease their angry Gods by *supplications* and *sacrifices*, and yet were never the better, to send to some famous Oracle for its direction.

Answer to the first Quære.

Do not presume to be your *Oracle*, but let Gods *word* be it, this will give you a clear and unambiguous *answer*, why the *Lord* hath done all this evil against us, why he thus implacably pleads against this *Church* and *State*, which formerly were his cheif *favorites* and *darlings*, as the signets or bracelets on his hand and arme, as the vine

Hag. 2. 23.

which

which himself had planted, and watered, and wonderful preserved, which is *now become a scorn and shame to it self*, no less then an hissing and astonishment to all the Nations round about. Isaiah. 5.

As the *Lord pleads* against his Vine of the *Jewish Church* and *State*, appealing to the men of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, to *judge between him and his vine*, so may it be said in our case. God pleads against our unthankfulness to God. Isaiah 5. 3.

What *could the Lord have done* more for us then he did, and what could we have done less for his cause than we have done, or more against it? How were we planted, and watered and weeded, and fenced, and fortified, and loaded with the choicest blessings of heaven and earth? What was there wanting in *England* to make us happy, but holy, humble and thankful hearts, with suitable lives, the good grapes which God expected; instead of which, Oh what sower grapes did we bring forth to God and man,

O how weary were we of Gods *blessings*, as if God had cloyed and *overladen us*? How like the nauseating *Iews*, we lothed *this Manna*, the reformed religion, with all holy institutions and Christian Sacraments, and decent devotions and orderly Government. How neglected? how prophaned? how despised were these by many wanton Christians? how many scornfully washt off their infant Baptism, by a Fanatick and Schismatick novelty of *Anabaptisme contrary to the Analogy of faith*, and practise of all Churches in all ages. How have many vomited up their *former Lords Suppers*, and as if they had surfeited heretofore have fasted from them these twice seven years. How impatient have they been of such *Pastors* and *Preachers*, such Bishops and Presbyters as told them the truth, & sought to restrain those inordinate liberty's, which they wickedly affected? how hateful have these *Michajahs* been to those that loved

to be flattered in sin? how have many gnashed their teeth against such *Stephens* as have sowed no pillows under their elbows? Yea how over zealous have we been in pleading our own *secular* and *civil causes*, to much civil War and blood; pretending to preserve our liberty till we overtook our slavery, and really intending on all sides to get places of *profit* and *preferments* to our selves, to feather our *nests*, and set up our *selves on high*, above all that was called Gods among us. What vast sums have been expended to make us miserable? on the other side O how *cold*, *careless*, *formal* and *indifferent* have we been as to *Gods great Cause*, for the good of *souls*, the true *Preaching* of the Gospel, the due administration of Religion, the preservation of our happy reformation, for the order, honour, government, support, and just incouragement of able and faithful Ministers in this Church, which are and ever will be wanting in many

Against our self seeking

*Quere what cause it is*

many places of this Nation, where there is as yet no proyender for the Ox that should tread out the Corn; Hence St. *Austin* observed, *Quod Christus non capit, capit fiscus*, what Sacrilege detaines from Christ, is wasted for no purpose.

§. We have with *great clamour* pretended Gods *Cause*, Religion and reformation on all sides, but this on all sides is worsted, abased, deformed, discountenanced, diminished, and by many evil eyes sought to be wholy impoverished and *starved*. God pleads against us for our hypocrisie and pretensions, for our *Sacrilegious* invasions and *confusions*, which rob God of his honour, Christ of his right and homage, the Church of its portion and patrimony, Ministers of their *maintenance*. The nation of its liberality, the dead of their bequeathings or legacies, true Religion of its support, and all sorts of people of that piety, charity and hospitality, which was intended them, by

*Against our Hypocrisie and Sacrilege.*

those

those holy honest and legal *donatives*, against which no man pleads, that hath not a mind to purloyn them, or to have a good penniworth of them, at the Devils Market. God pleads against us for our *trusting too much to the arme of flesh*, and *prophaning Gods Cause* with evil means, with sinister policies and practises, bringing to Gods Altar, the *lame* and *lean*, and *defective* and *deformed sacrifices* of *parsimonious* and *sordid* spirits, which are not *propitiations* but pollutions, which the Majesty of God is so far from accepting, that he *abhors*, and casts as dung in the deceivers face; *God is not to be mocked.*

So God pleads against our *unthankfulness* as to God, so to man, our *discontented* humors and impatience that knew not how to *bless God and man*, for moderate blessings. God pleads against the *perjuries* and *forswearings* among us. The little or no conscience made of *contradictory Oaths*, the familiar

Against our unthankfulness to man.

but

*Quere what cause it is*

but vain and most rude *swearings*, which are so common among, not onely the dregs and beasts of the people, but even those persons who pretend to some good *breeding*, who by evil speaking corrupt good manners.

God pleads against Ministers.

God pleads against us Ministers of all degrees, for our insufficiencies, presumptions, popularities, inconstancies, and scandals, for not better employing the great advantages and Talents they had, to the glory of God and his Churches good, rather then private Pomp, profit or pleasure.

Against Lawyers.

God pleads against you *Lawyers* for your *failing* in those duties, which the Law, your callings, and your consciences call you to, in all righteous causes, publique and private.

Against Nobility and Gentry

God pleads against the *Gentry* and *Nobility* for their *luxury* and *idleness*, for the *looseness* and *flattery* of their lives, doing so little good where they have so much means and opportunities, wanting nothing but

good

good *hearts*, and a true sense of honour, which aimes in all things at Gods glory, the Churches flourishing, and their countrys peace.

God pleads against all sorts of people in and out of *Parliament*, for their *servility* and flattery; their *partialitie* and *compliances* with any powerful lusts and predominant humors of men, never so palpably against law, reason, religion, oaths, and conscience; *prostituting Parliamentary honour*, and priviledges, fulnes and freedome, not onely to interne factions, but to extern tumults, and violent impressions, after which open rapes there is no great cause for some men ever to plead their *Parliamentary virginity* and *honor*. *Against the people in and out of their Parliaments.*

God *pleads* against the *common people* for their *Phanatick* giddiness and *factious foolery*, that loves to have many *Masters*, to heap *up teachers* to themselves, having *itching* ears that will not *endure sound doctrine*, but delight to be carryed 2 Tim. 4.3.

about

about with every *wind* of *doctrine*, according to the sleights and cheats of those that ly in weight to deceive unstable and silly souls, which are ever *learning*, and *never come* to the *knowledge of the truth*.

Against the Souldiery.

§. God *pleads against the souldiery*, for their *variableness*, *violences*, *insolencies* and *inconstancies*; For their carrying on *private* and *partial interests*, so much and so long to the prejudice of the *publique safety*, *peace* and *honour*, making their places and payes, their bellies and backs, the Common-wealth; putting the military interest into the scale against the whole Nations: To the exasperating of so many of their *countrimen* and *brethren*, who have not patience to see themselves, their Parliaments and Country so oft *hasted* and *defeated*, of their long looked for *peace*, and pretended settlement. Hence they that should be the *bulworks* and defence of the Nation are looked upon by many, as the *leaches* and *incubusses*,

that

that suck the blood and spirits of it, making themselves the onely Soveraigne Senate, the necessary imployment and absolute Government.

God pleads against rich men.

5. God pleads against *Rich men* for the uncharitablenes of some in hard times, the unhospitablenes of others in the distresses of many, even excellent Ministers, who for their consciences sake, and as they think for *Gods cause*, have been reduced to a morsel of bread. For their *racking* and oppressing poor tenants; for their *pusillanimity* and *cowardise in a good cause*; for being so prodigal of their souls and true Religion, to save their estates or their skins.

Against our incorigiblenes and obstinacy.

6. *God pleads against us all*, and as a Nation full of men that are wantonly wicked, and *industriously injurious to God and man*, delighting to destroy its self, refusing as *Babylon* to be healed, when God and good men would have done it long ago. Men that make a mock

of

of such sins as the sober and modest heathens, though Idolaters did abhor; a people as sacrilegious robers of God, and prophaning his house, that in affliction sinned more and more, & contracted dross even in the very fiery furnace; that hath so little fear of *God* or *reverence* of *man*, or sense and conscience of duty to either, that it hath shut its eyes as wilfully blind, and is most impatient to see or seek and follow the things that belong to the *publique peace*; turning *piety* into policy, and reformation into faction, and the true interests of Religion into those of *parties* and *opinions*; that hath so oft prayed and fasted in vain, be-
James 4.3. cause we prayed amiss, to consume blessings on our lusts, fasting onely for strife, & for debate, to smite and destroy one another, that might and not right should take place: a Nation that is self condemned and self punished, yet still dares to pursue or applaud most unjust and unwarrantable *actions* (that

is

s downright villanies and horrid evils) retending that *good will come thereby*; o that from the crown of the head (if we had either *Crown or Head*) to the *ſoal of the feet* it is full of biles and putrifi-ed ſores, both of ſins and pains: We have made neceſſities of ſinning, and God hath made neceſſities of our ſuffer-ings.

Therefore hath God ſuffered us to *run* to this *great conſumption*, and ſatisfied us with our own deluſions; therefore are we *ſmitten once and again* by the *ſword and rod of God*, which crieth aloud to us, making upon us the wounds of an e-nemy, which are not *healed by any friend-ly hand*, becauſe we are not yet turned to *him that ſmote us*; therefore *do our eyes fail*, not only with the expectation of the calamities that are coming upon us, but alſo with *looking for good things*, *when behold ſaluation is far from us*, be-cauſe our iniquities have blinded us, and not only bereaved us of, but ſtill keep *good things from us*, yet ſtill we truſt to I know not what *Phyſicians* or *State Mon-tebanks*, that are either πολλοὶ, or φαῦλοι, ἀληθεῖς, or ἄπιμοι, or ἄπιστοι, either many and cannot agree, or *unſkilful* and of no va-lue, or *unfaithful* to others, or *unhealth-*

God pleads a-gainſt us by the voyce of his rod, & ſore af-flictions.

Our too great truſt in State Phyſici-ans.

*ful* themselves (*insani & insanabiles*) of *inauspicious looks and lives*, yea & for the most part *incurable as to their sins and sores*; loving, as *vitiated appetites*, to feed not on wholesom food, but on *trifles & trash*; not *Reason and Religion, Law and Gospel*, but the froth of *seraphick fancies*, and *unbounded raptures*, which the better to colour over and excuse the miseries and ruines of three *flourishing Kingdoms*, pretend to expect a *glorious kingdom* of Christ on earth, such as he never yet enjoyed for sixteen hundred years, nor ever will after their methods of blood and violence, which are the weapons of *Antichrist* and *Belial*, not of Christ or good Christians.

Answer to the first Question.

This then is the answer which I may with too much truth and justice give as from the Lord to you or any that enquire of the *burthen of the Lord*, why he *pleads, writes*, and *acts such bitter things* against us, as if he would be no more entreated by us, nor his *heart could be toward* such a people as we are, whose *iniquities* have *forfeited former blessings*; the sins of *peace* made way for *war*; and war for *domestick confusion*, and these for *foraign invasions*, and this for *Romish superstitions* and *Papal usurpations*; for there

want

want not *factors* at home and abroad, who are earneſt ſticklers for *a Cauſe*; (which they call the *Catholick Cauſe*) what it means, as to our *civil* and *religious concern*, as to the honor of this *Nation*, and the *proſperity*, or peace, or liberty of the *Reformed Religion*, you cannot be ſuch ſtrangers in the Chriſtian world as not to conſider. Factors for the Romiſh Cauſe.

How long (as *Eliah* ſaid to the *Iſraelites*) will you halt between two opinions, between *two Cauſes*; nay now they are multiplied to *twenty*; if the *Reformed Church* and Religion, which God ſo bleſſed with *temporal* and *ſpiritual bleſſings*, with excellent *gifts and graces*, to your forefathers in the laſt century of *Englands honor and happineſs*; if it be Gods Cauſe *grounded on his word*, ſealed by *his Spirit*, and conform to the beſt of *primitive Churches*, let us plead and aſſert this againſt *all other*; for it will be our wiſdom and our ſtrength, our honor, our peace and our ſafety, as it was to our forefathers for the greateſt part of an *hundred years*, while they joyned *Loyalty* to *Religion*, and thought nothing further from *Reformation* then *Rebellion* againſt *lawful* 1 King. 18. 21.

*Magistrates* and their *lawful power.*

a Query, what is the cause of God we now are to plead in *England.*

The Second Question you may make to me is, *What is this Cause of God, which we are now to plead in England? or what is there left for us to do?*

*Ans.* Maintain honest and just principles within.

I Answer as *Joseph* to his brethren, *this do and live:* First, retain *righteous principles* as to civil Justice and true Religion, in your own judgements, and in the Court of your consciences; that you be not *warped* in them, so as by any events or successes, to *call evil good, and good evil, darkness light,* and *light darkness:* Though you have not opportunity, or power, or courage at present to plead according to your *principles*, yet turn not from them, comply not with such as are false, unjust, irreligious; though it be so evil a time, that *prudence adviseth,* and piety indulgeth you silence; yet time may come when you may plead for *Gods Cause* according to your principles: Mean time, as by your speaking you do not strengthen the hands of an evill cause and evill doers, so by your silence and reserve, you do cast a *just reproach* and *discountenance* upon them; there is yet hope of a *good Cause*, if

Isa. 5. 20.

the

the Court and Judge be not corrupted: Notwithstanding that some evil *pleaders* cry it down.

Secondly, As you have *power and opportunity* given you, dare to *own and plead for Gods Cause*: 1. In your own breasts and consciences, every grace and vertue, every good thought and motion is Gods, plead them against *thy own lusts and the Devils temptations.*

2. Plead as you have power and opportunity.

1. In thy own soul.

2. In thy *Family and relations*, plead *Gods Cause* against *lying, swearing, idleness, prophaneß*, &c.

2. In thy family.

Thirdly, In civil affairs plead the cause of *Justice* against any injury and oppression; the *pooreſt mans cause* if just, is Gods; yea and the *cause of a wicked mans* so far as it is just, is Gods. Specially in *causes of publick Justice*, there thou must not be wanting to speak out, by pleading when called to it, by petitioning and praying for Justice, yea and acting for it, according to what is just and lawful; but a just Cause must not be set; as the *Ark* on the cart of injustice; we must not so plead Gods cause as to injure *Cesars*, nor *Cesars*, as to injure Gods.

3. In the publick.

As to justice.

Fourthly, Plead the cause of true *Religion*

As to true religion.

The verity of it.

ligion, of our *reformed Religion*, of the *Church of England*, and its excellent constitutions against the *Pseudo Catholick Church of Rome*; the cause of Christs merits and intercession against all mixtures humane or Angelick; the cause of the *Scriptures* against all *Apocryphal traditions*, and *fanatick illuminations*, which are false illusions, and not divine inspirations; The cause of the *Lords Supper* in its compleatness, against the *subductions* and *seductions* of the *Mass*, which loseth the bread to all, and steals away the wine from the Laity; the *cause* of the *worship of God in a known tongue*, to *edification*, against *Latin service*, which *few understand*, so as to say *Amen* to what is prayed; So the *cause of chast and honorable mariage* against scorched and affected *celebacy*. Further, Plead as for the *verity*, so for the *unity* of the *Reformed Religion* and this Church, against

The unity of it.

those *lice and locusts*, those *noxious and noysom vermine* of *factions*, which have so *gnawed and defaced this Church*, & the *reformed religion*, and which seek to deprive your children of one, and your selves of *both the holy Sacraments*.

Plead for the *Churches patrimony*, for

the

the ſupport and honor of an able, learned, authoritative and worthy Miniſtry, in due order and government of it, againſt thoſe *ſacrilegious ſpirits*, who with *Judas* grudge all as waſt, that is by a *grateful charity* and *devout ſuperfluity*, poured on Chriſt for the honor of his name, and the *encouragement of his Miniſters*, according to the *general tenor of Gods word*, not only permiting, but commanding us by *perſonal* or *national donations*, to *honor God with our ſubſtance*. For the Churches patrimony.

Plead for our due *ordination* & *ſubordination as Miniſters*, that we may not by *novel projects* of *levelling confuſion*, & *plebeian Anarchy* in the Church, be driven from *conformity* with the ancient Fathers, and the order and *univerſal government of all Chriſtian Churches*, as wel as our own from our firſt being *Chriſtian*. For right ordination and ſubordination among Miniſters.

If you think us able or worthy to take care of your *ſouls eternal welfare*, and to adminiſter to you *ſpiritual things*: Do not think us worthy to be condemned to *live to dye*, and to be buried even yet alive, *with the meaneſt of the people*, ſince by what I have now diſcourſed to you, it may appear that we are neither ignorant of nor enemies to the true *cauſe of God* & *Jeſus Chriſt*, as our blind and bit-

ter

ter enemies do maliciously pretend. Of which cause I have in all my discourse not spoken my own private sense only, but the sense of my *Fathers* & *Brethren*, of all true *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, and of the whole Church of *England*.

Peroration or conclusion of Gods cause and the pleadings of it.

Lastly, Since I hope you are as *willing as able* to *plead Gods cause*; and since I know you pray that God would *plead* your and your posterities *cause* in *Church* and *State*, that he would make yours his *own cause*; Keep, I beseech you, always in your souls this *holy resolution*, not to be wanting in your place & to your power to assert *Gods cause*; *corde et ore, consilio & exemplo, prece & praxi, atramento & sanguine*: In which behalf you cannot form your thoughts to a *better tune and words* then *Luther* did when he undertook that great *Cause of religious reformation*, *Aut propugnemus causam Dei, aut succumbamus cum causa Dei* Either let us stand by the cause of God, or let us fall with it; for as it will rise again in due time, so it will raise those with it to *eternal glory*, who stood stedfastly by it; *Which that we may ever do, God of his mercy grant us wisdom & courage through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour; to whom with the Father and holy Spirit be everlasting glory. Amen.* FINIS.